

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Yaowarej Mekratri for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Applied Anthropology, Business Administration, and Speech Communication presented on July 11, 2003.

Title: East Meets East: Cross-Cultural Communication between Japanese Managers and Thai Subordinates.

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This research mainly examines the superior-subordinate relationship between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates working in joint ventures in Thailand, especially the management style of the Japanese and the reactions of the Thais. Cultural adaptation of Japanese expatriates and Thai subordinates is also explored. Through this study, we gain better understanding of the Japanese-Thai interpersonal relationships, communication patterns, work ethics, and other cultural values with particular emphasis on recurring themes such as concepts about work, vertical relationship, authority and supervision style, and gender issues. The in-depth interviews were conducted with ten Japanese managers, six Thai managers, and 12 Thai subordinates in Thailand in 2001.

Findings show that although there are some similarities in Japanese and Thai cultural values at work, conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings still exist between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates because of their cultural differences. Both parties also have some stereotypes and negative myths of the other party.

Concerning concepts about work, Japanese superiors prefer immediate actions from their Thai subordinates when problems arise whereas when the Thais encounter some difficulties in solving problems, they hesitate to inform their superiors. Since there is no clear job description in Japan, the Thais often feel uncomfortable when their job responsibilities overlap with their colleagues.

Moreover, unlike Japanese people, Thai employees do not have a strong commitment to the company.

Vertical relationship explores how the Japanese and the Thais build and maintain their relationships at work and after work hours. The Japanese believe that relationships should follow job accomplishment while the Thais think that good relationships should be established before working. After-hour activities are suggested as means to strengthen relationships between superiors and subordinates.

Furthermore, Japanese superiors tend to use different strategies to supervise their Thai subordinates; those strategies include scolding, expecting expression of opinions, information sharing, and delegation of authority in decision making processes. However, the strategies seem not to work properly in Japanese-Thai joint ventures due to cultural differences at work.

Although gender can be a barrier in career advancement in Japan, Japanese expatriates do not see this as the case in Thailand. However, most of the Thai female subordinates complained that women were less likely to get promotions while Thai male subordinates thought that career advancement was blocked because managerial positions were occupied by and reserved for Japanese expatriates.

At the end, three cases are presented to illustrate how Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates adjust in intercultural work settings. Each case consists of two individuals' work experience and adaptability. We can see the importance of individual differences as some Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates realize cultural differences and try to adjust to the intercultural work settings while others hold back and, finally, resign from the company.

To avoid conflicts and misunderstandings, and to work together effectively, Japanese managers and Thai subordinates should realize their cultural differences and learn the other's culture. If problems arise, they should be open-minded and willing to help each other solve the problems.

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East Meets East: Cross-Cultural Communication between Japanese Managers and
Thai Subordinates

by
Yaowarej Mekratri

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of my father and grandparents. If I were not for the fortitude of these strong souls, I would not be here today to attain my graduate experience in the United States and to complete my thesis.

East Meets East: Cross-Cultural Communication between Japanese Managers and Thai Subordinates

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Due to an increase in multicultural companies worldwide, the need to understand and to strengthen cross-cultural communication between people with diverse cultural backgrounds is crucial to the success and productivity of business operations. In a recent article issued by the Royal Thai Embassy in Tokyo, it was noted that Japan has become a major direct investor in Thailand since 1960. Due to the fact that Thai governmental policy has favored the expansion of exports, many Japanese companies relocated their production bases to Thailand for exporting. Even though Japan, Thailand, and other Asian countries were severely hit by economic recession in 1997, Japan did not withdraw its direct investment in Thailand.

According to the Board of Investment of Thailand (BoI), from 1997 to 2000 Japan had the highest investment in Thailand of any country. In 2000, the total net application of Japanese investment submitted to the Board of Investment of Thailand was approximately US\$ 2,292 million. The applications to the Thai government by Japanese companies for investment have been increasing constantly since 1997.

A study of the business sentiment survey on Japanese companies in Asia in January 2003 was conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). Thailand has earned the highest direct investment scores from Japan among Southeast Asian countries since May 2002. This trend of increasing Japanese investment in Thailand makes the study of Japanese-Thai business partnerships worthwhile.

In addition to the overall trends mentioned above, there are many interesting aspects of cross-cultural communication in business environments worthy of study in this setting. My personal experience with Japanese business ventures in Thailand provides some insights into the nature of cross-cultural communications in this context. Specifically, I once worked as a sales representative in the Sales and Marketing Department of a Japanese-Thai joint venture steel manufacturer in

Thailand. During my stay at this organization, I had two supervisors: a Japanese manager and a Thai manager. After I graduated and joined the company, I observed several conflicts and misunderstandings between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. I had not realized many of the finer points of cross-cultural communication between Japan and Thailand until I was exposed to working with the Japanese.

For my first few months at the company, I was not given any specific tasks since the company had not initiated its production lines immediately. I was very bored and felt disoriented. I did not know what I should do. Later, the Japanese managers gave my colleagues and myself a lecture about steel and its production process. My female colleagues and I were trained and assigned to greet customers who visited the sales office, serve tea, copy documents, and run small errands while our male colleagues did not have to do such tasks.

After six months, the company started running its production lines. At this point, I saw more conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings occurring between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. For example, a Japanese manager scolded a Thai subordinate in front of other Thai subordinates, resulting in that person losing face amongst the Thai counterparts. Moreover, during both internal and external meetings, Japanese managers often used the Japanese language despite the presence of Thai subordinates. Thai subordinates felt uncomfortable about this situation. I was once scolded in front of my colleagues by my Japanese manager; I felt very humiliated. I later decided to resign from the company and pursue a Master's Degree in the United States.

My work experience led me to become more interested in cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people in intercultural work settings. I decided to conduct a research study on superior-subordinate relationships in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand to find possible causes and solutions for the existing conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand.

Currently, many Japanese-Thai joint venture companies have experienced a high turnover rate of Thai employees because of conflicts and misunderstandings between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates as well as because of the personal goals of many Thai employees, including pursuing another degree and looking for a new job with higher promotions. The high turnover rate can result in high cost and waste of time for hiring and training new employees. Owing to differences in their cultural values, business practices, and management strategies, Japanese managers and Thai subordinates had negative stereotypes and myths of the other party, which later developed into conflicts and misunderstandings in the workplace. Hence, it is important to understand the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and cultural diversity which occur among the host country nationals and expatriates so that they will be able to work effectively and productively together.

This thesis aims to examine the superior-subordinate relationships between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint venture companies in Thailand. A specific emphasis will be placed on important aspects such as business and person-to-person relationships, the effects of gender, and effects of differences between Japanese and Thai cultures.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a theoretical background for my research on cross-cultural communication between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates in a joint venture company in Thailand, the studies of intercultural communication in international organizations are explored through the three different perspectives of anthropology, business administration or management science, and speech communication. I first examine the definitions of culture along with the concepts of organizational culture and its relationship with national and societal cultures in Japan and in Thailand. To understand cross-cultural communication between two cultures in binational work settings and management styles, it is important to understand the concepts of culture in general, the societal culture and organizational phenomena within specific work settings, and their relationships with each other (Kleinberg 1994).

This literature review is divided into two main sections. The first section elucidates general concepts of intercultural communication in international organizations, including the concept of culture, the development of studies of organizational culture by the three disciplines mentioned above, and research on organizational communication in international organizations. The areas of research interest of each discipline concerning the studies of intercultural communication are also presented. The second section summarizes and compares the literature concerning work concepts and cultural values of both the Japanese and the Thais.

Since culture and people's behavior are dynamic, several anthropological research methods, including ethnographic research, have been used in this study to capture the complexity of cultural phenomena in organizations and to gain a better understanding of organizational members' behavior. Thus, I would like to focus the literature review on the anthropological approaches to the studies of organizational culture and cross-cultural communication in binational work settings although

approaches and perspectives from management science and cross-cultural communication in the international work settings are also included.

History of Industrial Anthropology and Organizational Culture

The history of industrial anthropology and its research on organizational culture are first explored so that we can understand how this field of studies has developed and learn how various relevant investigative methods have been used. The history of industrial anthropology can be dated back to the 1870s in the city of Chicago. A human relations study called the Hawthorne Studies was conducted at the Western Electric company, which led to a greater recognition of the human relations school. It was also the beginning of the field of business anthropology, known as industrial anthropology at that time.

Researchers in the field of industrial anthropology began to study about human relations in 1930s when W. Lloyd Warner used the existing “functionalist models” with his fieldwork on the Aborigines of Arnhem Land, Australia (Hamada 1994). Later, Elton Mayo of Harvard conducted long-term organization research, called the Hawthorne Study. In this study, “the researchers investigated the human relationships among workers and ideologies that underlay their work-related behavior” (Hamada 1994: 11). Besides the Hawthorne Study, other famous studies about organizational ideologies and behaviors in which functionalist theories and participant-observation methodologies were used were “Yankee City” or Newburyport, Massachusetts, and Whyte’s Street Corner Society.

However, during the 1950s and the 1960s, anthropologists’ studies of human relations within organizations declined because people criticized that the functionalist models of the human relations school placed emphasis only on management and ignored the existence of trade unions. Critics asserted that there are some pitfalls in the models of functionalism-structuralism. New paradigms were brought in so that we

could gain a better understanding of the complexity of business organizations. Some of these included cultural ecology, materialism, Marxism, and postmodernism.

From 1960 to 1980, ethical concerns emerged among professional anthropologists, which resulted in the prohibition of proprietary research and little research conducted by anthropologists at that time. In 1980s, there was a revival of studies conducted by applied anthropologists. Consequently, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) allowed proprietary research and many anthropologists started consulting work as they were able to perform contractual work. Along with this, many industrial anthropologists changed their focus of study to third-world societies, industrialization overseas, and international organizations because of the globalization phenomenon.

Concept of Culture

Culture in international organizations is influenced by several factors such as specific people, society, the economy, and politics. To explore such an organizational culture, it is important to study it from a holistic perspective. To begin with, it is vital to understand the concept of culture in general so that we can better comprehend how culture develops and changes overtime.

Scholars in the three disciplines of anthropology, management science, and communication have defined the concept of culture in various ways. One of the most famous concepts of culture was developed by the British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor. According to Tyler, culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Hamada 1994: 10; Adler 1997: 14; Ferraro 1998: 16).

Several famous pioneer scholars have continued to discuss the concept of culture in terms of its “integrated totality” (Hamada 1994: 10). This can be seen in Evans-Pritchard’s studies of “social institutions as interdependent parts of social

systems” (1951: 9), and Nadel’s discussion about “the integrated totality of standardized behavior patterns” (1951: 29). Other scholars today still adopt Tylor’s concept of culture. Jill Kleinburg (1994) defines culture as an integrated system, consisting of a complex set of interrelated elements such as knowledge, beliefs, and values, guiding people in their social interactions with others as well as in living in everyday life.

In addition, culture is viewed as a human product because people try to create meanings to make sense out of their ways of living and to understand their environment (Downs 1971; Schultz 1995). Kluckhohn and Kelly regard culture as “all the historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and nonrational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men” (1945: 97). Other scholars also view culture as being “the man made part of the environment” (Herskovits 1955: 305), and as being “a mental map which guides us in our relations to our surroundings and to other people” (Downs 1971: 35).

The aforementioned concepts of culture mainly focus on the concept of culture as an integrated whole and a man-made product. Every element of culture is interrelated. To understand culture, we need to consider all elements of culture. However, the above concepts of culture may be insufficient in studying organizational culture because such concepts overlook the dynamic aspects of the culture. Culture in organizations can change overtime. When people with different cultural backgrounds work together, they may need to adjust their existing cultural mindset. Ferraro (1998) and Ong (1987) include cultural change in their concept of culture. Ferraro (1998) said that culture is also a dynamic system which can change and develop overtime. Additionally, Ong refers to cultural change in her concept of culture as follows.

‘Culture’ is taken as historically situated and emergent, shifting and incomplete meanings and practices generated in webs of agency and power. Cultural change is not understood as unfolding according to some predetermined logic (of development, modernization, or capitalism), but as the disrupted, contradictory, and differential outcomes

which involve changes in identity, relations of struggle and dependence, including the experience of reality itself. Multiple and conflicting complexes of ideas and practices ... in situations wherein groups and classes struggle to produce and interpret culture within the industrializing milieu. (Ong 1987: 2-3).

Unlike most of the early twentieth-century anthropologists, particularly those in the school of traditional functionalism-structuralism, who do not include cultural dynamics and change in their perspective (Hamada 1994; Ferraro 1998), scholars nowadays emphasize cultural diffusion. According to Gary P. Ferraro (1998: 25), cultural diffusion is “the spreading of cultural items from one culture to another.” Many scholars in management science conduct their research on organizational studies and its culture based on the concept of cultural diffusion to solve organizational problems and to create productivity in the workplace (Hamada 1994; Maccoby 1994; and Dibella 1994).

Another perspective relates to historical background as an important factor that can be used to understand culture. According to Marshall Sahlins (1985), one should not overlook “historical events” and “cultural meanings” to comprehend “certain social phenomena” because people usually carry with them previous beliefs, meanings, and expectations (Schein 2000: xxiv). This perspective is also supported by Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology. According to Boas, three fundamental perspectives – “environmental conditions, psychological factors, and historical connections” – should be studied in order to understand culture (McGee and Warms 2000).

When considering the fact that historical perspectives and social environments are also important for understanding culture, we should not overlook the fact that “culture is transmitted through the process of learning and interacting with one’s environment rather than through the genetic process” (Ferraro 1998: 17). Geert Hofstede presents an analogy between culture and a computer program; he refers to culture as “software of the mind” because people act based upon their mental

programs, including their patterns of thinking, and feelings (Hofstede 1997: 4).

Hofstede (1997) also states that people acquire culture through their learning process, social environment, as well as from an individual's nature and personality.

In conclusion, culture is a whole dynamic system of learned and shared beliefs, meanings, patterns of thinking, custom, art, law, morals and values which a group of people have and which dictate how to behave accordingly. Culture is also derived from the social environment, historical background, human nature, and an individual's personality. In addition, cultural change and cultural diffusion are important in the study of international organizations because it consists of people with different cultural backgrounds.

In this study, I emphasize not only the integral concept of culture but also cultural change and diffusion because joint venture companies usually consist of at least two national cultures along with their various subcultures. The globalization process also causes some changes and diffusion of cultures. Thus, it is common for culture in organization to change and diffuse overtime so that the organization can survive.

Apart from these concepts of culture, there is also the debate on organizational culture theories – structural functionalism and symbolism. According to McGee and Warms (2000), the functionalists believe that there are various institutions that constitute and maintain society. This school of thought is partly influenced by Herbert Spencer's concept of social organism. According to Spencer, society is analogous to an organism. As an organism consists of different organs, society is likewise composed of various institutions. These institutions are important since their function is to maintain and sustain society. The functionalist view is that an organization's survival depends on its ability "to adapt the external environments and to integrate its internal processes" (Schultz 1995: 15). Therefore, the main function of the organizational culture is to solve the aforementioned external and internal problems of the organizations' members.

Nonetheless, there are some criticisms of the analyses of structural functionalism in the studies of organizational culture. First, “functional statements are frequently untestable because they often affirm their consequences” (Hamada 1994: 13). Second, the analyses of the functionalists lack the concept of cultural change because they place more emphasis on the maintenance of society. Third, functional analyses need to be redefined in the social and historical contexts. Another criticism is that functionalists overlook the power dimension inherent in social systems (Hamada 1994).

The second perspective is symbolism. This perspective views organizations as “human systems which express patterns of symbolic actions” (Schultz 1995: 15). Meanings and organizational reality are created and defined by organizational members. Thus, this symbolist perspective tries to understand the symbols and meanings of the organizational culture shared among the members of the organizations.

Tomoko Hamada (1994) also uses the symbolist perspective in her theoretical framework in studying organizational culture. She states, “people create, reinvent, and manipulate symbols in order to increase predictability and control over organizational phenomena” (1994: 27). Due to differences in people’s perceptions and cognition in interpreting and creating organizational phenomena, people tend to interpret and understand events differently. She adds that organizational allies do not necessarily have the same values. Hamada (1994: 27) points out that symbols in the organizations such as stories, rites, rituals, conflicts, and so forth should be included in the studies of organizations because “disintegration” and “integration” in organizations are influenced by those organizational symbols.

The symbolist approach helps explain how organizational members recognize symbols and interpret them. Conflicts and misunderstandings are common in binational organizations because organizational members may interpret and analyze the symbols and situations differently. The symbols include actions, artifacts, and rules in the organizations.

Anthropological Methodology, Theory, and Organizational Studies

In the study of organizational culture, several anthropological methods are used to gain an insight into the values, customs, and underlying meanings of a given organization. Some of the key concepts and contemporary approaches to the studies of organizational culture in the discipline of anthropology are discussed below.

Similar to several classic anthropological theorists such as Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, current business and industrial anthropologists use the holistic approach to understand culture and behavior in organizations. The emic approach or native view is also a significant approach used to understand and interpret organizational culture. We should look at a certain problem or situation from a broader perspective, or in a larger context, to be able to find situated or underlying meanings for what is going on in an organization.

The primary method which business and industrial anthropologists use to study corporate culture is participant observation. Anthropologists usually spend time contacting their informants, observing their behaviors, and living as well as participating in their everyday life. This also allows access to a holistic view.

However, since research usually relates to studies of different cultures, we have to be aware of the attitude of ethnocentrism. According to Franz Boas's cultural relativism, we cannot compare cultures since culture is unique. Instead, we should study culture in its context. Ethnocentrism can be a barrier for us to understand other cultures and to communicate effectively with other people from diverse cultural backgrounds if we believe that our culture is superior to other cultures. Thus, when we study and analyze organizational culture, it is necessary to be aware of ones' ethnocentric attitudes so that we will be able to look at the issue objectively.

Anthropologists mainly use the cultural paradigm to conduct research on organizational culture because they believe that an organization consists of "complex, interactive, and multiple levels of worldviews possessed and expressed by members of sub-groups" (Hamada 1990: 115). People's worldviews differ among the subgroups

of the organization and influence their work-related values and attitudes, which are relevant to organizational behavior. In addition, the worldviews influence the interpretation and perception of a given work assignment. According to Hamada (1990), the concept of the worldview and its impact on organizational members' behaviors and communication styles are as follows.

According to this viewpoint, organization is not an objective reality. It is perceived through the cognitive process of the members who bring forth a system of interrelated values and attitudes acquired in their socializing processes. The worldview which contains most comprehensive ideas of order that a group of people project on their environment, on their relationships, and on their self-image provides a context to interpret reality and gives legitimacy for behavioral outcomes. The worldview is not a mere aggregate of ideas but a system where elements contribute and fit together to make a coherent whole (Hamada 1990: 116).

The cultural paradigm can be applied to the study of an international organization because it consists of people with different cultural backgrounds and worldviews. It is likely that they have different perceptions and ways to deal with problems, which results in possible misunderstandings and conflicts between organizational members from different cultures.

Similarly, to understand the culture of the international or binational organization, Jill Kleinberg (1994) suggests that we should consider the relationship between societal culture and organizational culture. Firstly, organizational behavior is shaped by societal culture. The patterns of behavior, and values are usually influenced by "the values and normative patterns of social interaction characteristics of the larger society" (Kleinberg 1994: 155). Another assumption is that organizational members' societal backgrounds also have an impact on the way people interact to the organizational environments.

Nevertheless, Kleinberg (1994) comments that there are some pitfalls in the aforementioned assumptions of societal culture's effects on organizations because culture is not clearly defined as a social construct. Moreover, the management science's positivistic paradigm tends to rely on survey research and quantitative data, which often fail to decipher the complexity of shared meanings and the behavior of organizations' members. Eventually, Kleinberg (1994: 157) presents "nation-specific work sketch maps," similar to cross-cultural comparisons used in management science. However, the "nation-specific work sketch maps" are drawn from natives' perspectives or experience of organizational members representing their societal culture and organizational culture. The methodology used to gain such information is ethnography such as participant observation and interviews. Recurrent themes are captured from the study; and a domain analysis is also implemented (Kleinberg 1994). Thus, such "nation-specific work sketch maps" help us to understand organizational members' assumptions about their work, their superiors as well as their work colleagues.

Another cultural approach to the study of a binational organization was conducted by Rene Olie (1990). According to Olie, organizations are "culture producing phenomena" and part of a "specific cultural environment," including national or societal, regional and industrial environments. The integration problem of the binational organizations is usually related to culture and can contribute to the success or failure of international mergers. Tomoko Hamada (1994) also proposes a similar perspective on organizational studies. Hamada (1994: 26) states, "An organization is a socio-cultural system embedded in larger socio-cultural environments."

The above concepts of organizations as "culture producing phenomena" and organization-wide culture as having an influence on the organization are another key concept for this research study because such concepts provide us with a framework to understand organization and its culture. It can be concluded that organizational culture is influenced by cultural environments such as national and societal

environments of which the organization is a part. The problems in binational work settings are likely to be culturally related. Thus, to understand such cultural phenomena and conflicts in organizations, several cultural environments are important for the analysis and interpretation of the cultural conflicts and misunderstandings in the organizations.

The negotiated culture perspective is another dominant research approach presented by Brannen (1998), and Brannen and Kleinberg (2000). This perspective is a result of a long-term ethnographic study of Japanese management of an American firm. It elucidates dynamism and historical attributes of the cultural concept, particularly in the binational work settings. Emphasis is placed on sense making. Cultural negotiation is identified in the interactions and meanings created by individual actors in the organizations. The individuals working in the binational organizations usually bring in their national culture or culture of origin to the process of cultural negotiation. Apart from the individuals' culture of origin, the negotiated culture also emerges from the influence of structural/contextual influences. Thus, the negotiated culture perspective includes the representations of culture as a social construct, the dynamism of culture, its existing variation, and its inconsistency in the binational work settings.

Comparison of Anthropology and Management Science

The studies concerning organizational management and corporate culture have long been in the discipline of business or management science. Organizational culture research has also been influenced by theories in the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. However, there are some differences between the research done by management scholars and by anthropologists. The comparison between anthropology and management science is elucidated so that we can learn which approaches and perspectives each discipline uses to study organization and choose applicable and appropriate approaches for study. Some of the approaches and

perspectives may be integrated so that we can gain more accurate data and be more effective in learning about organizations, while being able to find solutions to the existing conflicts and misunderstandings.

An initial point to consider is that management scholars and anthropologists hold different viewpoints in the study of organizational culture. According to Simcha Ronen (1986: 20), the goal of management science in the study of organizational culture is to “use such knowledge to design the most effective organizational strategy and structure possible and to make the most effective use of human resources in different cultures.” Thus, the management science scholars try to understand culture so that they will be able to find effective and practical solutions and strategies to manage organizations. They are more likely to focus on profit, productivity, and efficiency in the workplace.

On the other hand, the goal of the anthropologists’ research on culture and organization is “societal propagation and evolution” (Dibella 1994: 313). The anthropologists study cultures to gain better understandings of their members and “the dynamics of comparative human behavior, and social, cultural, and economic change” (Dibella 1994: 313). However, applied anthropologists may be similar to those scholars in management science because applied anthropologists study culture in organizations, oftentimes to improve the work environment of the organization.

Another important point to consider is that business scholars and anthropologists have different orientations in the study of organizational culture. The research performed by management science scholars tends to be comparative in nature and attempts to explain national culture with regard to problems in organization (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson 2000). The business scholars also rely more on quantitative or numerical data to try to understand organization (Ronen 1986; Hamada 1994; Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson 2000). The research of management science is often a comparison of two different national cultures and their values in the workplace; some strategies are often offered as a “quick-fix” for organizations.

Unlike the management science scholars' analyses, anthropologists' analyses on organizational culture concentrates in-depth on one culture and only then is a comparison made. Since anthropologists believe that hard data is insufficient in explaining the complexity and the dynamics of cultures and human behavior, they rely more on soft or qualitative data in their research. Culture is studied holistically and as a unique entity in its own historical context. The anthropologists try to understand and learn about culture and its members from the natives' perspective to capture the unique qualities of particular societies (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson 2000).

A third point is that the methodological approaches used to study organizational culture in the disciplines of management science and anthropology differ. Due to certain constraints, including time limitation, the management scholars need to implement rapid quantitative assessments and surveys to understand the situation of the workplace so that they will be able to provide some strategic solutions for the company. Such quantitative assessment of organizational culture is inadequate in capturing the dynamics and the essence of culture and human behavior; it may also cause some bias in the research (Ashkanasy, Broadfoot, and Falkus 2000). Several management scholars agree that qualitative methods should be used in such studies to gain more valid data.

On the contrary, in the discipline of anthropology, ethnographic methods, including participant observation, content analysis, and in-depth interviews are utilized to study the complexity of organizational culture and human behavior. Anthropologists tend to use several ethnographic methods to decipher the meanings of cultural phenomena and unique human behavior in particular societies.

Theoretical Framework in Studies of Organizational Culture

Several theories in management science are influenced by theories in the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. The following are some

popular theoretical approaches in studies of organizational culture in the discipline of management science.

There are three perspectives to study and understand organizational culture (Martin and Meyerson 1988; Frost et al. 1991; Martin 1992). The three perspectives can be seen in research studies completed by many scholars such as Dibella (1994), Hamada (2000), Kilduff, and Corley (2000), and Payne (2000).

First, the integration perspective focuses on harmony, homogeneity, and “consistency between cultural manifestations such as values, formal and informal practices, and artifacts like stories, rituals, and jargon, creating an organization-wide consensus between all members of the organization” (Schultz 1995: 11).

Second, the differentiation perspective acknowledges that organizational members have different social and ethnic backgrounds and may perform different roles. Organizations are filled with inconsistencies. Thus, conflicts and inequalities are common among the organization’s members. However, it holds that organizations are composed of subcultures. Shared meanings and subcultural consensus exist among members within subcultures. The differentiation perspective usually focuses on the studies of different subcultures.

Finally, the fragmentation perspective attends to the ambiguities of organizational life. There is neither consistency nor inconsistency between cultural manifestations. Moreover, there is a lack of shared meanings and confusion among organizational members. According to Tomoko Hamada (2000: 93),

The fragmentation view suggests that a symbol has multiple meanings and all meaning is contextual. This notion leads us to believe that meaning cannot be understood without taking into consideration the position and history of the individuals and groups doing the interpreting and enacting. The fragmentation model calls attention to deviations and ambivalence in organization.

Schultz (1995) draws attention to some pitfalls in the concept of culture after considering the fragmentation perspective. Referring to the cultural concept, culture

includes shared meanings of members in the same society. However, the fragmentation perspective points out conflicts, confusion, uncertainty, and ambiguity which may be possible and are also sometimes essential characteristics of organizational culture. Thus, Martin and Meyerson (1988) developed the analytical model (the matrix framework) as an alternative reformulation of the traditional concept of culture.

These three perspectives provide three different frameworks to explore organizational phenomena which are culturally embedded. Based on these three perspectives, each situation or organizational phenomenon is categorized into a certain group. Then, recurrent themes are drawn out for further analysis.

Communication Perspectives: Intercultural Communication and Organizational Culture

The global economy and the increasing numbers of multinational organizations, along with cross-cultural contacts are factors vital to the study of cross-cultural communication in several contexts, including in work settings. These factors allow investigators to gain better understandings of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and to deal with them effectively (Adler 1997; Hofstede 1997; Ting-Toomey 1999). Communications scholars usually emphasize a reciprocal relationship between culture and communications, and their influences on each other (Gudykunst 1997; Ting-Toomey 1999). According to Edward Hall, Larry Samovar, Richard Porter, and Nemi Jain, "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Varner and Beamer 1995: 17).

According to Asante, Newmark, and Blake (1979), in their reference to the historical backgrounds of the intercultural communication studies, there are two schools of thought: the cultural dialogue school and the cultural criticism school. In the cultural dialogue school of thought, cultural dialogists such as Kochman (1972), Samovar and Porter (1973), and Condon and Yousef (1975), emphasize humans' communication processes and how people from different cultural backgrounds manage

to interact verbally. Their work is based on rhetoric and symbolism in humans' interactions and behavior across cultures. "Argument, belief, values, structures, and poetics were considered basic branches of dialogue" (Asante, Newmark, and Blake 1979: 18).

In the second school of thought of cultural criticism, cultural critics such as Kluckhohn (1956), and Barna (1973) focus on understandings of cultural values to solve some intercultural communication conflicts. Their work can be categorized on three levels: classification, analysis, and application. First of all, barriers to communication across cultures are identified. Then, the researchers analyze those "barriers in terms of priority, intensity, and difficulty" (Asante, Newmark, and Blake 1979: 20). Finally, application to specific settings is created accordingly.

This research study focuses more on the cultural critic approach because it is more appropriate to analyze the cultural values of the Japanese and Thais in work settings, and to understand conflicts and misunderstandings that have existed in organizations. Analyses of this type have useful applications such as creating effective measures to lessen conflicts and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds.

Besides the above basic approaches for studying organization, there are also some current approaches and methodologies which were originated in the discipline of communications, and some which were derived from anthropology. The work of anthropologists has long been discussed in the intercultural communication studies in the discipline of communications since the 1930s and 1940s (Asante, Newmark, and Blake 1979). The anthropologists' theories and methodologies have contributed insights into the studies of culture and communications, such as emic and etic approaches, and ethnography.

Ethnography

Anthropologists' ethnographic approaches are also implemented to help communication scholars observe communication in organizations and decipher the meanings which organizational members share and their speech acts they perform within the organizations. Concerning the organizational studies, the scholars rely on Geertz's thick description (1973) to capture layers of meanings situated in organizational life.

Cognitive anthropology and ethnomethodology were introduced to the studies of intercultural communication since the earlier research methods of traditional sociologists and traditional anthropologists, which focused only on fieldwork and data collection, did not accurately reflect cultural members' or natives' perspectives (Burk and Lukens 1979). Burk and Lukens (1979) describe several advantages of cognitive anthropology (Frake 1968) and sociological ethnomethodology over traditional research methods since cognitive anthropology and ethnomethodology can generate better understandings of people's minds and activities in everyday life in relation to language, cognition, verbal and nonverbal communication, and culture through the eyes of the natives.

As far as the implementation of the ethnography in the discipline of communication is concerned, Dell Hymes introduced the ethnography of speaking in 1962 (Carbaugh 1990). Hymes "... called for studies that were ethnographic in scope and communication in design" (Carbaugh 1990: xvi). According to Donald Carbaugh (1990), concerning Hymes' studies, ethnography is utilized based on the following assumptions.

The assumptions were and are (a) communication is systematically patterned and needs to be studied on its own and for its own sake; (b) the systematicity is intimately linked with social life and needs to be studied as such; and (c) the nature of communication itself is culture-specific, therefore cross-culturally diverse (Carbaugh 1990: xvi).

Two Basic Approaches: Emic & Etic

Two basic approaches – emic and etic approaches – originated in anthropology and are used in studies of culture and communication (Jones 1979; Gudykunst and Nishida 1989; Gudykunst 1997). The emic approach is the study of communication in a certain culture in an attempt to understand the systems and behavior of humans as viewed through the eyes of the natives. Participant observation is a primary method of the emic research. The emic approach is also popular among anthropological research approaches. On the contrary, the etic research tends to look at the systems and behavior from a position outside the system. The etic research approach generally is comparative in nature; it often examines dimensions of cultural variability to elucidate differences and similarities in communication behavior across cultures. Some communication scholars such as Triandis (1972) and Jones (1979) suggest that researchers should integrate these two basic approaches in the studies of intercultural communication. The combination between the two approaches can help create more valid data to capture meanings of cultural phenomena and communication.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation

In addition to several approaches and different methods in the studies of intercultural communication and organizational culture, cross-cultural adaptation is also an important issue. Since organizational members working together in the binational work setting often come from different cultural backgrounds, it is vital for them to attempt to understand each other and work together effectively. In several cases, sojourners, particularly expatriates, need to stay in an unfamiliar culture to carry out their overseas assignments. The literature on the sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation process is also emphasized since it is a significant issue for Japanese expatriates and Thai subordinates working together in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in

Thailand. They need to learn to understand each other and adjust to each other to communicate with each other effectively.

Young Yun Kim (1995) presents an open-systems approach in her studies about cross-cultural adaptation. This approach is seen in the quote. “Adaptation is a fundamental life goal for humans, something that people do naturally and continually as they face the challenges from their environment” (Kim 1995: 172). She also adds that adaptation is “a complex and dynamic process” occurring through communication. The adaptation process is usually affected by both internal and external conditions such as intrapersonal, social, and environmental conditions (Kim 1995).

Apart from the definition of adaptation, Young Yun Kim (1995) further elucidates the concept of stranger in her open-systems theory. According to Kim (1995: 174), “the term *stranger* incorporates in it a wide range of cross-cultural resettlers and sojourners.” The term is used to analyze “the social processes of individuals who confront a new and unfamiliar milieu” (Kim 1995: 174). There are three boundary conditions of strangers. First, the strangers have their own primary culture and need to move to a new and unfamiliar culture. Second, the strangers depend on the host culture to complete their personal and social needs. Finally, the strangers have firsthand communication experience with the host culture (Kim 1995).

Huber W. Ellingsworth defines adaptation as “those changes that individuals make in their affective and cognitive identity and in their interactive behavior as they deal with life in a new cultural environment” (1988: 259). Furthermore, he employs several terms in his dyadic theory, one of which is foreignness. It is an important concept to identify intercultural interaction. Foreignness refers to the initial perception of a person toward the other with diverse cultural backgrounds. The concept of foreignness is usually reflected in external appearances such as physical appearances, dress, and manner of speaking. The degree of foreignness is usually reinforced or lessened by interaction (Ellingsworth 1988).

Thus, these are some concepts and elements of cross-cultural adaptation. Kim and Ellingsworth both define adaptation as a process which individuals go through when they stay in a new and unfamiliar environment. From those two concepts, adaptation is a complex and dynamic process in which individuals' cognitive and behavioral identities are affected through interactional communication with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

However, those two concepts are inadequate to explain cross-cultural adaptation of international businesspeople and international students because they are too broad. They do not clearly mention issues such as ability and personality of a person to adapt to a new environment, and personality and cultural values that a person has learned from his/ her own culture.

In addition, Kim (1995) and Ting-Toomey (1999) use "stranger" as a term to define their theory whereas Ellingsworth (1988) employs the concept of foreignness. Both terms – stranger and foreignness – refer to a similar concept of something unfamiliar in one's environment. People usually consider others from different cultural backgrounds or countries as strangers or foreigners.

The concepts of stranger and foreignness are broad and too general because they do not address the specific purposes of, or the lengths of the contact, of a person with the new culture, which are used in distinguishing sojourners from immigrants.

Besides the afore-mentioned concepts, Adler (1987) and Ruben (1983) proposed an alternative approach to cross-cultural adaptation. Adler (1987) discusses culture shock as sojourners' intercultural adaptation processes. Culture shock is not a disease; instead, it is a learning experience which leads to self-awareness and personal growth. Similarly, Ruben (1983) states that culture shock is a sojourner's experience which contributes to personal development.

Theoretical Approaches to Cross-Cultural Adaptation

As this paper focuses on the cross-cultural adaptation of sojourners, namely international businesspeople, theoretical approaches addressing such an adaptation process are discussed below. It is vital to learn some basic elements of cross-cultural adaptation to better understand the process of the adaptation of the Japanese expatriates working in joint ventures in Thailand.

Young Yun Kim (1989) elucidates studies of sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation processes. She states four main research issues: culture shock, effectiveness, adaptive change, and personal development. Culture shock is the set of psychological responses of sojourners' experiences in an unfamiliar culture. The concept of reentry shock is also explained; sojourners usually experience emotional and physiological difficulties when they return home after staying overseas for a certain period of time.

Then, Kim discusses factors promoting sojourners' overseas effectiveness. Those factors are individuals' personality characteristics, conditions of their stay in the host culture, and communication skills.

Regarding adaptive change, Kim (1989: 278) describes four stages of adaptation, including "a 'honeymoon' stage," "a stage of hostility and emotionally stereotyped attitudes toward the host society," "a recovery stage," and "a final stage." She also introduces "curves" of adaptation processes, specifically U-curve and W-curve patterns of change. These curves generally describe the degree of sojourners' satisfaction with living in an unfamiliar culture. The W-curve pattern adds the reentry phase of the sojourners' experiences when they return to their home.

Finally, Kim (1989) presents an alternative approach to define sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation as personal development. Culture shock leads to a greater self-awareness and personal growth because individuals usually gain learning experiences through "physiological, psychological, social, and philosophical discrepancies" when they confront a new and unfamiliar culture (Kim 1989: 279).

Kim's approach in studies of sojourners' adaptation as mentioned above is too simplistic to explain complex and dynamic cross-cultural adaptation processes of sojourners because the theory does not address predispositional characteristics of sojourners, conditions of stay or environment of the host culture, differences in cultural values of sojourners and those of the host culture, network, interpersonal communication skills, and individuals' expectations and motivational goals.

Recently, Kim (1995) has proposed an open-systems theory in studies of cross-cultural adaptation. An important issue she adds to her present theory is the structure of cross-cultural adaptation and its constituent factors influencing ability of individuals to adapt to a new culture. She categorizes those factors into a structural model consisting of six dimensions of factors, which influence individuals' success in cross-cultural adaptation.

The first dimension is personal communication, including the cognitive, affective, and operational host communication competence. The second dimension is the host social communication; sojourners usually participate in the interpersonal and mass communication activities of the host population. Ethnic social communication is the third dimension, including subcultural experiences of interpersonal and mass communication. The fourth dimension includes three environmental conditions: host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength. These conditions affect individuals' adaptation processes. The fifth dimension is predisposition, or internal conditions of the sojourners, which also influences cross-cultural adaptation processes. The predisposition includes preparedness for the new environment, difference or similarity of sojourners' ethnicity and cultural backgrounds from that of the host population, and personality traits of sojourners such as openness, and strength. The last dimension is the sojourners' intercultural transformation; this dimension is either reinforced or impeded by functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity (Kim 1995).

In this present theory of open-systems assumptions, Kim adds several dimensions to studies of cross-cultural adaptation such as predispositional

characteristics of sojourners, environmental conditions, and differences between cultural values of sojourners and those of the host population. However, such a theory is not adequate in studies of sojourners' adaptation processes because the theory does not address individuals' motivations, and social network. These two factors can largely influence sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation process. For example, if an international student has a relative overseas, it is likely that the international student will be able to adapt himself/ herself to the host culture more effectively because he/ she will gain support from his/ her relative.

Similar to Kim's theoretical approaches to this field of research, Stella Ting-Toomey (1999) proposes an intercultural adaptation model, consisting of antecedent, process, and outcome factors, in studies of intercultural adaptation. Basically, Ting-Toomey elucidates factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation processes such as cultural distance, communication skills, and mass communication activities. However, Ting-Toomey may use different technical terms in addressing those issues. For instance, Ting-Toomey's cultural distance refers to affective, cognitive, and behavioral resources sojourners employ to cope with differences in cultural values, communication styles, and languages of the host culture. Kim (1995) explains similar concepts in her fifth dimension of predisposition in terms of ethnicity. Ting-Toomey (1999) discusses three sets of antecedent factors which influence sojourners' adaptation process as follows.

First of all, systems-level factors refer to those elements in the host environment affecting sojourners' adaptation processes such as the host culture's socioeconomic conditions, attitudes towards cultural assimilation or cultural pluralism, local institutions, the host culture's expectation of the sojourners' role, and cultural distance between the two cultures – that of sojourners and that of the host.

The second factor type is the individual-level factors, including individual motivations, expectations, cultural and interaction-based knowledge, and personal attributes. Unlike Kim's theory, Ting-Toomey not only focuses on personal attributes or personality traits of sojourners but also expands the concept to individual

motivations and expectations because these factors can lead to success or failure in the cross-cultural adaptation process. For instance, individuals with positive and realistic expectations are likely to be able to prepare themselves to deal with the host culture. Additionally, individuals who have information about the host culture, such as history, cultural beliefs, linguistic backgrounds, and geography, will be able to adapt themselves to the host culture more effectively. Furthermore, Ting-Toomey introduces demographic variables such as age and educational level as factors influencing the adaptation process of sojourners. For instance, people with higher educational level are likely to be able to adapt to a new culture more effectively than those with lower educational backgrounds.

Finally, interpersonal-level factors, such as relational face-to-face network factors, mediated contact factors, and interpersonal skills factors, can lead to success or failure in a sojourners' adaptation process. Similar to Kim's theory, mediated contact factors include the use of mass media. Ethnic media helps ease the emotional feelings such as loneliness and stress of sojourners because sojourners tend to reach out for magazines, television programs, and radio when they feel lonely and when they want to learn the host's culture and language.

Moreover, Ting-Toomey adds that members of the host culture can contribute to the sojourners' success in the cross-cultural adaptation process. "Intercultural adaptation is a collaborative learning journey in which host members should play the helpful host role and new residents should play the mindful discover role" (Ting-Toomey 1999: 244). With the host members' collaborative effort and willingness to accept newcomers or sojourners into the host culture, sojourners will gain support and be able to go through adaptation process more effectively.

In addition, Ting-Toomey discusses the intercultural adaptation process with regard to identity change and challenges for the sojourners. These are also important processes which sojourners usually experience when they need to adapt themselves to a new and unfamiliar culture. In this paper, issues about identity change are not

focused on. However, it is important for further studies in the cross-cultural adaptation process.

Ting-Toomey's theoretical approach seems to cover several issues and concerns in the study of cross-cultural adaptation of sojourners. However, it is important to consider the adaptation process holistically. We should consider the issue from different perspectives within its own context. For instance, if we want to study cross-cultural adaptation of Japanese businesspeople in Thailand, we should examine the individuals' personality traits, expectations, and motivations of these sojourners. At the same time, we should consider differences or similarities between the host members' cultural beliefs and those of the sojourners. Moreover, corporate cultures and business protocols of those two cultures should be taken into consideration because they can influence the cross-cultural adaptation processes. For instance, if Japanese sojourners tend to believe that their corporate culture or business strategies are superior to those of Thai managers, it is likely that they will not be able to communicate and adjust themselves accordingly, which ultimately results in low productivity of the company.

Intercultural Training

Practical application by some communication scholars with regard to the study of intercultural communication should not be overlooked. Most of the practitioners in the discipline of communication usually focus on the application of the intercultural communication and organizational theories to develop effective and practical training programs for organizational members, and to solve conflicts in the organizations.

In this research, I do not go into detail concerning the literature on intercultural training programs. However, such issues as training designs can be future research for the study of organizations because decent training programs can help develop and prepare organizational members and solve conflicts in organizations. For those who are interested in intercultural training, some of the key literature concerning

intercultural training can be found in the work of DiStefano (1979), Pedersen (1979), Schnapper (1979), Brislin (1989), and Bhagat and Prien (1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, as far as the studies of organizational culture and cross-cultural communication in work organizations are concerned, many scholars from the disciplines of anthropology, management science, and communication (Walck 1990; Dibella 1994) have encouraged collaboration of research and interdisciplinary integration because their theories are complementary. Their different orientations – theory and practice – can contribute to the credibility, validity, practicality, and innovation of the field of organizational culture studies and cross-cultural communication in binational work settings.

CHAPTER 3: JAPANESE CULTURE

There have been numerous research studies on Japanese culture, especially in work settings because Japan has become one of the world's most economically powerful countries. Japan has made investment in many countries worldwide. Research on cross-cultural business management and intercultural communication between the Japanese and non-Japanese people have become a major issue among scholars in various disciplines, including anthropology, management science, and communications. However, there are only a few cross-cultural communications research studies between Japanese expatriates and Thai employees in the work environment, and none from an anthropological perspective.

Research on Japan and its culture has been of interest among scholars in various disciplines after Japan recovered from World War II and became successful economically during the 1970s and 1980s. The following section summarizes some relevant studies about Japanese culture.

An excellent study on cross-cultural communication between Japanese businesspeople and non-Japanese in work settings was done by Tomoko Hamada from 1977 until 1988. Hamada (1991) conducted her research by using anthropological perspectives and ethnographic approaches. In her book titled, *American Enterprise in Japan*, she explores American direct investment in Japan, and cross-cultural management between the Americans and the Japanese. She cited case studies of a Japanese company and an American-Japanese joint venture company.

Hamada (1991) gives a definition of the joint venture as well as a description of the needs to form a joint venture. She defines an international joint venture as a company in which "two or more companies of different national origins commit people and resources to an organization, which will be influenced by the parent firms' corporate cultures, operational systems, communication processes, and power structures" (Hamada 1991: 5). She points out that conflicts in the organization occur

when a joint venture is not controlled by a single management entity. In her study, she uses “a behavior-oriented approach to culture” because such an approach helps to explore underlying meanings in the organization which are perceived, interpreted, and evaluated by organizational members (Hamada 1991: 6).

According to Hamada (1991), corporate culture consists of shared assumptions and meanings which help its members perceive, interpret, and evaluate incidents, people, and phenomena. Corporate culture is a dynamic and complex process; it is also influenced by a wider culture such as societal and national cultures.

Four perspectives of industrial ethnography are emphasized in Hamada’s study for the data collection design. Those perspectives include “participant observation, emphasis upon cultural process, cultural interpretation, and comparative framework” (Hamada 1991: 7). Since the organization, its people, and its activities are dynamic and complex, it is important to study the organization by using an approach that is comparative, holistic, interpretive, relativistic, and cultural.

Hamada (1991) first depicts Nippon Kaisha, a Japanese company, and its organizational structure, values, customs, practices, and business operations. Later, the author describes a U.S.-Japanese joint venture company in Japan. She explains how an American enterprise and its employees try to adjust to enter the existing system of the Japanese because their company is located in Japan. In my research study, the joint venture is located in Thailand, so it is likely that the Japanese have to put more effort to enter the Thai system.

There are certain Japanese cultural values and business practices described in *American Enterprise in Japan* that are worth elucidating here and also important to my study since they pertain to the study of the culture of Japanese-Thai business and employer relations. First of all, status hierarchy in Japan can be seen in the physical layout of the office, seating arrangement, and dress codes. Several practices, namely exchange of name cards, and the use of language, also reflect status distinction in Japanese organizations.

The second value is the actual concept of the job. Hamada (1991) describes some changes occurring in terms of the job concept among Japanese employees. In the past, Japanese companies tended to recruit new graduates from leading Japanese universities because they believed that those graduates had high potential for the job. Those employees focused on teamwork and the benefits of the company. However, the attitudes of the new generation have changed. More emphasis is put on individuals and their personal satisfaction. The younger generation is encouraged to express their opinions.

Another aspect of the Japanese job concept relates to gender. Gender distinction in relation to promotion still exists in the Japanese organization in spite of the law supporting female employment. Women usually have fewer chances to get promotion to a managerial level. Instead, they are expected to get married and to resign from the company at a certain age. Usually, the Japanese company hires female employees to do a clerical or administrative job.

The third value of the Japanese culture is interpersonal relationships. Strong emphasis is placed upon interpersonal relationships in Japan. The interest of the group takes precedence over the pursuit of self-interest. Hamada notes,

Japanese viewed a company as an organic entity of interactive relationships. The Japanese archetype of a self was one who can feel human in the company of others. A Japanese person was invariably identified as acting in some kind of human relationship. (Hamada 1991: 211)

However, according to Hamada (1991), when it comes to their relationships with non-Japanese people, it is very difficult and time-consuming for non-Japanese to enter the exclusive and insider system of the Japanese group because the Japanese usually regard the non-Japanese as a *gaijin* (outsider/ foreigner). Hamada (1991) explains that such a Japanese concept of Self comes from the country's location as an isolated island and its long history of racial homogenization.

At the same time, we have also noticed that the Japanese system exhibits a high degree of insularity and ethnocentrism. At the national level, this insular mentality may derive from Japan's geographical isolation and its prolonged process of cultural and racial homogenization during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). State Shintoism enforced since the Meiji period (1868-1912) until the end of the Second World War (1945) also encouraged the superiority complex of the Japanese race over other races. Many Japanese still believe in the uniqueness (pure blood) of the Japanese in the world. (Hamada 1991: 213.)

Finally, Hamada (1991) came up with some ideologies of the American businesspeople in comparison with those of the Japanese businesspeople. She also asserts that there is no certain opposite concept of the social phenomenon of the two cultures because the social phenomenon consists of "diverse components, internal counterpoints, and variations" (Hamada 1991: 198).

Hamada's research study is similar to my research study in that both studies focus on cross-cultural communication in joint ventures. Hamada's explanation of the Japanese sense of cultural supremacy over the non-Japanese helps elucidate some conflicts and misunderstandings which have existed in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. I also agree with her definition of corporate culture that it is dynamic and influenced by a wider culture or a societal culture. Nevertheless, Hamada's study does not include the power dimension in the organization and the details about the superior-subordinate relationships that are so important between the Japanese superiors and their Thai subordinates.

In *On Track with the Japanese: A Case-By-Case Approach to Building Successful Relationships*, Patricia Gercik (1996) emphasizes mutual understanding and trust as key factors in building successful relationships with the Japanese. Such a process of gaining mutual understanding and trust from the Japanese usually takes time, effort, commitment, reliability, sincerity, and some knowledge about appropriate Japanese culture, etiquettes, and rituals. "Acceptance is hard-earned for non-Japanese" (Gercik 1996: 37). Gercik also cites examples of new employees who try to

get accepted into the company. She explains that the company usually tests and sees if the new employees can exhibit correct credibility, loyalty, ability, and attitude to prove that they can fit into the group or the company. People can also establish trust and gain acceptance by using humble language and gestures of commitment. Often, common characteristics such as location of the birthplace, type of university and background can create links with the Japanese.

Punctuality and a sense of time are also important in Japan and they can reflect the employees' commitment and respect for the companies. Working after hours is also common in the Japanese company. The Japanese usually stay at the office to work after their usual office hours, which is another way to show commitment to the company.

Similar to Hamada's analysis of Japanese personal relationships with the non-Japanese, Gercik (1996) explains that non-Japanese are usually regarded as outsiders (*soto*). She also added that drinking provides mutual atmosphere to establish personal relationships which are a basis of trust in business. During after-hour activities or retreats, the Japanese usually become more open and exchange their opinions; direct confrontation is possible and does not cause loss of face when people share their criticism. It is the time for reflection and self-evaluation.

Japanese employees' bonding with the company is also explored. "Japanese regard their company as a family and refer to it as a house (*uchi*). Each house has a different identity, history, and attitude toward work and employees" (Gercik 1996: 81). Thus, the employees are expected to work for the good or the success of the company. New recruits usually need to go through training programs which also emphasize the spiritual bonding and the feelings of commitment to the company.

Gercik states that the Japanese educational system provides an opportunity for the Japanese to build a network and get to know people since networks and people are important in the Japanese life. Japanese people start to establish their networks when they enter the university; professors usually suggest some good companies to their students. Upon entering the companies, new graduates need to go through a series of

training programs in which they again form a strong bond with other new graduates. Such bonding usually lasts throughout their tenure at the company. In addition, the existing networks from the university are reinforced by “the dominance of elite public university graduate hires” (Gercik 1996: 181).

Relationships between superiors and subordinates or *sempai-kohai* relationships are also important in the Japanese organizations. The superiors are expected to be responsible for their subordinates and be protective of them; in return, the subordinates are expected to be obedient and pay respect to their superiors.

Gercik also describes the Japanese business practice of the *keiretsu* system. The Japanese *keiretsu* is a group of many different companies under the same big organization; all of the companies follow the same set of principles. Usually, there is a trading company representing all the companies within the *keiretsu*. Gercik points out that the *keiretsu* system makes it difficult for the non-Japanese companies to penetrate the market.

Moreover, information gathering is essential to the Japanese culture. Gercik explains such a Japanese value by citing Japanese history. From the information-gathering process, the Japanese have developed technologies. Gercik elucidates the Japanese history of gathering information.

In fact, the Japanese have a tradition of gathering and codifying information. As far back as four thousand years ago (Jomon and Yayoi periods) Japanese returned from visits to China with useful minerals and tools. This tradition intensified around A.D. 600 (Nara period) under the guidance of Prince Shotoku, who imported Buddhism, Confucianism, Chinese script, and other Chinese artistic and philosophical traditions. The twelfth century (Kamakura period) brought Zen Buddhism and Zen arts from China into the mainstream of Japanese thought and culture. Finally, from the time of the opening of Japan in the late nineteenth century (Meiji period) to the present day, Japanese have systematically borrowed ideas, systems of education and government, and technological know-how from the West. (Gercik 1996: 33)

Thus, Japanese people are likely to rely on gathering a lot of information or double-checking data which they already have. It is common for the Japanese company to hold several meetings to share information and get an approval for a proposal before reaching any conclusion. An informal discussion prior to formal meetings is emphasized as means to approval for business projects or proposals. *Nemawashi* or the groundwork is required; it refers to informal discussions, advance documentation and consultation prior to the formal meetings. The Japanese view having several informal meetings and consultations as being important to the solidarity of the group and to the consensus-making process. Gercik states that to get approval for a project or a proposal, one needs to prepare a proposal and approach people in charge for advice and for approval prior to formal meetings in which an official approval is granted.

From Gercik's book, there are several Japanese values which can be applied to my research study. The case studies cited as examples by Gercik are an effective way to learn about the Japanese culture in the work settings. Nevertheless, Gercik does not give a deep analysis for each Japanese value. She just gives an overview and a few explanations. It would be more insightful if more detailed explanations and deeper analyses are provided for each case study. Still, it is a good beginning for further research.

Thomas P. Rohlen's 1974 book, titled *For Harmony and Strength: Japanese White-Collar Organization in Anthropological Perspective*, provides insightful descriptions and analyses of Japanese organizations. Rohlen (1974) explores a Japanese bank's structures, practices, values, and assumptions of its organizational members. A large number of interesting cultural values are investigated and analyzed such as relationships, teamwork, women at work, decision-making processes, and activities during work and after work hours.

Rohlen (1974) emphasizes teamwork and cooperation which exist among group members. Competition rarely exists among employees. Individuals have a strong tie with an institution; relationships between organizational members and the

organization are interdependent. The success and failure of the company also affect its members; thus, the employees need to work hard and sacrifice themselves for the company's productivity and profitability. Rohlen (1974: 45) cites an example of Uedagin Bank's ideology as "one great family (*daikazoku*). An analogy of the family and responsibilities of each family member is used to elucidate relationships between the company and its employees and responsibilities as well as commitment of the employees to the company. The interests of the company take precedence over those of individuals.

First, the bank, like the ideal Japanese family, is an entity in which the interests of members are secondary to the interests of the family as a whole. It is everyone's duty to work for the well-being and reputation of the family, and in return the family exists for the benefit of all its members. The same relationship holds, by implication, between workers and the bank. (Rohlen 1974: 45)

Members of the company, similar to family members, have their responsibilities to maintain the solidarity and harmony of the company. The roles of the leaders and followers in the organization as older and younger members of the house are also explained.

As in the regular family, leaders and followers, old and young, men and women, all occupy different roles and have different degrees of authority. It is proper to respect differences and to be loyal to one's given place in the system. Leaders, like fathers, have a responsibility to watch over the welfare and best interests of their followers, and relations between different generations in the bank should follow the ideals of the family pattern. Older members should advise and educate younger members, and younger members should, out of gratitude and affection, show obedience and respect for their seniors. (Rohlen 1974: 46)

Rohlen (1974) further clarifies senior-junior relationships (*senpai-kohai* relationships) in Japanese organizations which are also a focus of my research study. Such terms of *senpai* and *kohai* are never used across the boundaries of sex. Rohlen says,

The application of these designations is limited to persons of one's own sex. Women are *senpai* for women, and men are *senpai* for men. One never hears a young man refer to an older woman as his *senpai*, and when women use the word they mean an older woman. Among the reasons for this division along sex lines is the implied comradeship between senior and junior, a form of comradeship that does not cross the boundaries of sex. (Rohlen 1974: 123)

Later, Rohlen applies such a concept of *senpai-kohai* relationships to superior-subordinate relationships in the work environment. He explains that senior-junior relationships are analogous to family relationships such as relationships between parent and children or between older and younger siblings. Loyalty, beneficence, sympathy and gratitude are key values in the relationships. Superiors are expected to advise, mentor, represent, protect, and discipline their subordinates. In return, subordinates should listen to, depend upon, follow, and respect their superiors. Superior-subordinate relationships are also expected to be long-term relationships.

The company's activities during and after working hours in Japanese companies are elucidated. Several activities, such as field trips, and drinking rituals, are created to strengthen the solidarity and harmony among the company's members. Group drinking parties after working hours are a common and important practice for Japanese companies. During the drinking rituals, people become relaxed, and it is common for them to express their opinions.

Concerning the Japanese decision-making processes and the use of power, Rohlen (1974) explains that Japanese superiors usually hold a lot of meetings to express their opinions, ask for advice, and allow their subordinates to share their opinions. However, the superiors have already made a decision. The process of the

superiors' acknowledging subordinates and sharing opinions is what becomes more important for the group.

There are many interesting insights from Rohlen's work to apply to my research study because he gives clear descriptions of the Japanese organization's incidents, activities, and problems. His analyses of the organizational phenomena and its members also help with the understanding of underlying processes in superior-subordinate relationships and in interactions between Japanese and Thai people. However, his study is limited to the work environment of the bank which may have some different structures and goals from other joint ventures in Thailand. Moreover, although Rohlen's research can contribute certain components to the analysis of my research, his research study does not reflect current situations of the Japanese work organizations because it was conducted in 1968-1969.

Rochelle Kopp (1994) describes cultural and organizational issues in Japanese companies in Japan and in the United States with a focus on employees on the white-collar and managerial levels. Kopp also discusses factors hindering the success of Japanese companies in the United States and the success of the Americans in Japan.

Kopp (1994) introduces several common problems in Japanese companies such as the authority to make a decision, access to information by non-Japanese employees, language problems, fewer chances to get promotions to the management level, discrimination against women at work, and socialization between the Japanese and non-Japanese employees. She also gives a summary of some root causes of the frictions between the Japanese and those non-Japanese employees. Some root causes Kopp (1994) mentions include language ability, cross-cultural communication skills, different communication patterns, leadership styles, decision-making patterns, corporate cultures, different personnel management, and employment systems.

The management paradigms are used in Kopp's work (1994) to explore Japanese multinational firms. Kopp (1994) points out from her study that Japanese management is likely to be identified as using an ethnocentric approach because Japanese companies tend to place Japanese expatriates on overseas managerial

positions instead of hiring local employees, which results in a lack of “internationalizing” policies in the Japanese firms. Those two factors are consistent with the ethnocentric approach. Kopp also indicates that an ethnocentric approach in management can lead to frictions and misunderstandings in multinational organizations. Her survey confirms some problems from the ethnocentric approach in management as follows:

... an ethnocentric international personnel policy contributes to problems such as limited promotion opportunities for local nationals, low productivity and increased turnover of local nationals, and friction between expatriates and their local subordinates. (Kopp 1994: 39)

According to Kopp, the Japanese tend to use such an ethnocentric approach in their personnel management policies because the process of expansion for Japanese international businesses has just begun. It is said that Japanese multinational companies will likely adapt their personnel policies and change them to other approaches such as a polycentric, regiocentric, and geocentric approaches.

Kopp (1994) elucidates various Japanese cultural values in the workplace and some frictions and misunderstandings between Japanese and Americans working together. Several suggestions to succeed in a Japanese company are also stated. The following are some of the cultural values and issues which occur in the Japanese companies.

In Japan, women do not have an active role in the workplace. They are usually hired to work for clerical positions. After they graduate from high school or university, they work for a certain period of time and then quit to get married and to have children. Women are supposed to become housewives and take care of the household while men should work outside the home. It is difficult for women in Japan to climb the corporate ladder or even to get promoted to high managerial positions. There are many Japanese women who are happy with their roles and enjoy their responsibilities. However, the role of the woman in Japan is now changing. After the

enforcement of the equal opportunity law, companies must not discriminate against female employees at work. Kopp (1994) adds that women are marginalized in Japanese society. Thus, it is possible that Japanese expatriates bring with them their cultural value towards women at work when conducting business in other countries. Non-Japanese female employees working in Japanese multinational companies may likewise experience some difficulties in getting promotions.

Kopp tends to use the management science approach to describe Japanese cultural values at work and to explain how to succeed in the company. Still, she elucidates several cases in which frictions and misunderstandings between the Japanese and the Americans occur. Some of her explanations are rather simplistic and do not include underlying meanings of each incident.

Historical and Cultural Context of Women in Japan

According to Japanese history, women lost their places, power and equality as samurai clans became strong as warriors in Edo period. The appropriate place for women was at home; they were also cut out from the political activities. Japan became a patriarchal society (Iwao 1993). It was not until October 1945 that with the new Constitution, allowing legal equality and respect for individual human rights, women finally gained their places and power in Japanese society. Meanwhile, the *ie* (household) system was abolished, which allowed women to have equality within marriage and the household. Nevertheless, in reality, women have not gained an equal level as men in Japanese society (Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (Eds.) 1995).

Since then, more Japanese women have had the chance to obtain higher levels of education and positions in work organizations. The Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL), which went into effect in 1986, also provides women with more career opportunities. However, women seem not to have made much progress in the workplace. They still receive lower salaries than their male counterparts; they also have fewer opportunities to get promotions. Furthermore, some companies implement

a two-track system. Women have two choices for their career. The first one is working in clerical positions with limited salary and promotions; the second one is working in managerial positions. With the second choice, women are required to do some possible overtime job and work in different places (Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (Eds.) 1995; Hendry 1995).

Usually, Japanese women are viewed by non-Japanese as submissive and obedient to men. However, Gercik explains that Japanese women have their own roles and responsibilities in the households.

On the surface, women seem completely dominated and live to serve men. On closer inspection, Japanese women have a powerful role in both their households and society at large. Women are responsible for the education and nurturing of Japan's most valuable resource, its children. (Gercik 1996: 63).

Some Japanese women themselves prefer being a housewife instead of working outside; they accept their socially expected roles. Gercik (1996) describes a women's world where they can exercise their authority and gain respect from the whole society. Women also gain authority financially. Gercik (1996) elucidates that men give their salary to their wives who will allocate an allowance to their husbands.

Women understand and accept the amount of energy required to nurture a child properly. They have separate lives from the men and within their world a woman's authority and values are absolute. (Gercik 1996: 65)

Lebra (1992) cites the concept of the M curve to explain women's life and their employment. Young women get a job after graduation; the job is usually temporary. Then, they quit their job after getting married and accept responsibilities for being housewives and rearing children. They tend to return to work again as part-timers when their children grow up. Women in general tend to follow this pattern of the M curve. In addition, they do not want to work as hard as their male counterparts.

Nancy Rosenberger (2001) mentions the lives and conditions of Japanese women at work, including the discrimination against women in the workplace. Although women are supported by the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in terms of maternity leave and promotions, they still experience discrimination at work. It is difficult for them to gain higher promotions. Women also think that their voices are not heard; they are not given a chance to express their opinions at work. Rosenberger (2001) further explains that women also have some physical and societal constraints to perform certain assignments. She cites an example of a Japanese woman who has to invite her male superior to go with her when she entertains her clients. Thus, Japanese companies try to lessen the problem of discrimination against women by creating new job categories, namely managerial positions, semi-managerial positions, and other secretarial positions. Despite the existence of the new job categories, women still need to show their commitment and hard work to gain higher promotions (Rosenberger 2001).

According to Nancy Rosenberger (2001), in the 1990s, there was a move to a more performance-based hiring and evaluation system. Japanese managerial styles are changing somewhat in Japan because of changes in attitudes of young people and of economic recession in Japan and around the globe, which threatens lifetime employment. Employees in Japanese companies were laid off. In addition, the European and American values of individualism have had an influence on the Japanese younger generation's attitudes. Rosenberger (2001: 127) elaborates, "The economy required domestic consumption, so young people and middle-aged women were encouraged to buy things to decorate their bodies and homes as ways of expressing their individual characters." As a result of the western influences and changes in the global trend, more women have entered the workforce. Nonetheless, women then are also encouraged to spend more time taking care of the household and the family.

Rosenberger (2001) also explains that in the 1990s, there has been a centrifugal tendency among younger Japanese women. They search for their personhood and

individuality. To gain such a personhood and individuality, “They sensed the complex intersections of popularized global ideals for women, national concerns for population or economic growth, local customs, and personal commitments” (Rosenberger 2001: 157). One way to achieve individuality is to change their way of life from being just a housewife to becoming a working woman. They also try to integrate both traditional Japanese customs of being good women and new ways of life for modern women. Rosenberger explains,

Japanese women constructed an individuality of centrifugal movement into new spaces and experiences that broke down old boundaries for women. They sought uniqueness in activities that appealed to and expressed their personal preferences. These activities had a spirit of spontaneity and enjoyment, but at the same time gave a sense of worth to their lives. (Rosenberger 2001: 157)

According to Japan Statistical Yearbook done by the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (See Table 1), in the year 2001, only 0.68 % of the women in the sampled population worked as managers and officials while about 29 % of the women were in clerical and related positions. On the other hand, about 5 % of Japanese men worked as managers and officials while about 13 % of men had clerical and related positions. These statistics show that the majority of Japanese women were in the clerical and related positions. We can also see that Japanese men are likely to be appointed to do managerial jobs whereas women are likely to be hired to work in clerical positions. However, we can see an increasing trend of women working as managers and officials from 1975 to 2001. In 1975, only 0.25 % of Japanese women were working as managers and officials in Japan while about 4 % of Japanese men were managers and officials.

Jeannie Lo (1990) describes two types of working women in Japan: “office ladies” and “factory women.” Office ladies refer to Japanese working in the office where men make major decisions. Women usually are responsible for administrative

jobs to support men's work. Women do not gain higher promotions as their male counterparts do and end up with tasks such as copying documents, serving tea, preparing coffee, and running small errands. Moreover, women need to be careful in maintaining their network of company relationships.

The distribution of responsibility in the offices is far from equal, however. Salarymen make all of the major decisions in the company. The OLs provide support by performing secretarial, housekeeping, or hostess duties. Many of the men in the company will move on to managerial positions, but OLs are rarely promoted: company policies bar women from management. (Lo 1990: 11)

Lo (1990) also elaborates on working lives of Japanese factory women. She explains that a typical day at work of the office ladies differs from the factory women's day in the factory. Work in the factory is labor-intensive. Factory women usually face hardship in their work in the factory. However, they are not pressured by group relationships. Most of their supervisors are women who usually give them instructions to do the job. It is possible for factory women to work until their retirement age.

Table 1: Employment by Occupation from 1970-2001 in Japan

Unit: 10,000 persons

Year	Total 1)	By occupation									
		Professional and technical workers	Managers and officials	Clerical and related workers	Sales workers	Protective service workers and service workers	Agricultural, forestry and fisheries workers	Workers in transport and communication occupations	Mining workers	Manufacturers, machinery operators and construction workers	Labourers
	Total										
1970 Av.	5,094	295	134	755	662	a)387	880	232	11	1,511	b)218
1975	5,223	364	206	820	738	a)457	654	237	9	1,580	b)148
1980	5,536	438	220	924	797	a)457	570	248	5	1,653	b)168
1985	5,807	538	211	1,021	861	501	502	227	4	1,689	230
1990	6,249	690	239	1,157	940	535	448	233	3	1,702	274
1995	6,457	790	236	1,252	945	610	363	237	3	1,687	310
1999	6,462	846	215	1,273	921	668	332	228	3	1,604	334
2000	6,446	856	206	1,285	911	677	321	221	3	1,580	347
2001	6,412	873	202	1,249	968	693	309	214	3	1,506	353
	Male										
1970 Av.	3,091	178	129	388	390	a)160	431	210	11	1,048	b)141
1975	3,270	207	195	405	457	a)207	326	219	9	1,142	b)95
1980	3,394	233	209	429	490	a)228	290	233	5	1,169	b)100
1985	3,503	293	197	453	537	228	261	216	4	1,171	128
1990	3,713	401	220	462	579	245	235	223	3	1,172	155
1995	3,843	448	216	495	582	276	198	224	2	1,215	173
1999	3,831	474	195	501	574	292	186	216	3	1,181	186
2000	3,817	475	186	509	570	299	182	210	3	1,166	194
2001	3,783	480	183	487	600	306	176	204	3	1,119	197
	Female										
1970 Av.	2,003	117	5	367	272	a)228	449	22	1	463	b)76
1975	1,953	156	11	415	282	a)250	329	17	0	437	b)52
1980	2,142	205	11	495	307	a)273	280	15	0	485	b)67
1985	2,304	245	14	568	324	273	241	11	0	517	102
1990	2,536	290	19	695	360	290	213	10	0	530	118
1995	2,614	342	21	757	362	335	165	13	0	472	136
1999	2,632	372	20	772	347	376	146	12	0	424	148
2000	2,629	381	19	777	341	379	139	11	0	415	153
2001	2,629	393	18	762	368	386	134	10	0	387	155

1) Including not reported.

a) Including sweepers and garbage men.

b) Excluding sweepers and garbage men.

Source: Adjusted from Japan Statistical Yearbook Online

Conclusion

Japan has unique business management styles which contribute to the successes of Japan's economy such as lifetime employment, well integrated decision-making processes, and teamwork. However, such Japanese business systems have changed recently because of outside influences, namely those from western cultures, economic recession in Asia, and the global economic trends. These adaptive changes have occurred so that Japanese businesses can survive. In addition, Japan needs to adjust some of its business practices to accommodate other cultures in which Japanese businesspeople establish joint venture companies.

CHAPTER 4: THAI CULTURE

Thai culture is mainly influenced by Buddhism. The majority of Thai people practice Buddhism; most of the rest follow Islam and Christianity. We can see such influences in Thai lifestyles, their work concepts, customs, beliefs, and attitudes. According to Buddhist teachings, desire, too much ambition, and struggling are a cause of “suffering.” Buddhism also emphasizes a “middle path” or doing things in a neutral way that avoids extremes. Such teachings have been instilled into Thai people since they are young.

In addition, several Thai proverbs reflect the way Thai people act. Some examples of those Thai proverbs are *Ha Chao Kin Kham*, which literally means working in the daytime and eating in the evening, and *Chao Cham Yen Cham*, which literally means just eating one dish of food for each meal. This proverb means “doing just enough to get by.” Thus, Thai people seem to be relaxed at work. They tend to work day by day. Such characteristics are general aspects of Thai people. However, not all Thai people act like that. Many of them work hard to gain higher income and better living conditions.

Thai Cultural Characteristics at Work

Henry Holmes and Suchada Tangtongtavy (1997) explore Thai cultural values at work. They point out several Thai cultural values and concepts of work which are essential to my research. Holmes and Tangtongtavy suggest that Thai people give more emphasis on strengthening relationships than on job accomplishment. Since expatriates usually give priority to task accomplishment while Thai people do not, the expatriates will demand for Thais to demonstrate greater commitment to work harder. On the other hand, due to the Thai emphasis on maintaining relationships, Thai people

expect encouragement and coaching from the expatriates. It is possible for conflicts to occur because of these different expectations.

Superior-subordinate relationships are examined through the concepts of *bunghun*. According to Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1997: 30),

Bunghun, or indebted goodness, is a psychological bond between someone who, out of sheer kindness and sincerity, renders another person that needed help and favor, and the latter's remembering of the goodness done and his ever-readiness to reciprocate the kindness.

Either the superior or the subordinate can owe *bunghun* to the other party by superiors covering their subordinates' mistakes or by subordinates helping superiors. The bond and indebtedness in their relationship usually continues for some time. Holmes and Tangtongtavy also point out a difference in superior-subordinate relationships between those in Japan and Thailand. The authors said that Thai superiors are expected to act like a father does. The superiors need to give support, direction, and control to their subordinates whereas in Japan, the institution, including a company or the government, usually provide services and support to employees. Thai superiors support their subordinates not only about their work but also about their personal life. Both parties usually work hard to develop and strengthen their relationships. Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1997: 35) conclude that "Indeed, loyalty has by custom been expressed more towards an individual than towards an organization or one's profession."

Moreover, Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1997) discuss Thais' expression of their opinions. Usually, expatriates complain that Thai people do not express their opinions. Holmes and Tangtongtavy explain that communication in Thailand is usually from the top down. Thai people learn to listen and to absorb rather than to question and to exchange their opinions. The Thais are afraid to say something wrong in front of others, which cause loss of face. The authors said,

Thai tradition has encouraged junior family members and young students to absorb rather than initiate, to 'get it right' rather than to question or express opinions, especially dissenting ones. The result of this pattern is that most Thais – even at rather senior levels – have not had such extensive practice in expressing themselves in an assertive way, in either Thai or English. (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1997: 35)

It is also peer pressure that causes Thais not to assert themselves too much or stick out from the group by expressing their opinions when others do not. Humbleness and modesty are valued. Moreover, expatriates criticize that Thai people lack analytical thinking. Holmes and Tangtongtavy use explanations of environmental factors and educational systems in Thailand to explain why the Thais seem not to have analytical thought. At school, Thai students are supposed to listen to their teachers and to remember what they learn so that they will be able to give exactly correct answers for the test. Students are not encouraged to make independent inquiry or initiative. The authors further add environmental factors to explain why Thais seem to lack analytical thinking abilities.

In the agricultural environment where things don't change much from year to year, many of life's major events tended to be unchanging, predictable, and not much subject to human influence; one would basically take life as it came, and do things the way they've always been done. In such an environment, many would consider that asking a lot of 'why's' would be somewhat irrelevant. (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1997: 86)

The authors state that because of such a communication style of not expressing opinions, the Thais are likely to be considered as incompetent. In fact, the Thais learn to remain silent because they believe that superiors are the ones who know the situation and find the solution to the problems. It is not appropriate for subordinates to express opinions or object to their superiors because such assertiveness can be

considered disrespectful to superiors. Furthermore, it is generally understood that subordinates should wait until superiors ask them to express their opinions.

The characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of Thai managers are also explained so that expatriates can understand how to become managers in Thailand. Superiors should show *nam jai* (generosity) and *hen jai* (empathy for) their subordinates by caring for subordinates, offering assistance, and understanding subordinates. In addition, the Thai decision-making process is usually a duty of the superiors. Holmes and Tangtongtavy explain that Thai people do not usually make a decision as a team. Instead, it is the superiors' responsibility to make a decision. Nevertheless, superiors should ask for and listen to opinions from subordinates.

Concerning a sense of time, urgency, and deadlines in Thai culture, Holmes and Tangtongtavy use the environmental explanation to clarify Thai lifestyle and work ethics.

Like farmers who work within agricultural cycles, urban Thais tackle tasks more in bursts than as a steady stream. Projects are often completed in a flurry of last minute effort. And afterward it makes sense to relax a bit in between jobs. (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1997: 78)

It is the superiors' duty to find a subtle way to encourage Thai people to work hard and keep up with the deadlines. Holmes and Tangtongtavy also discuss how superiors should delegate tasks to subordinates. Superiors should delegate tasks to subordinates to show them trust. Usually, the Thais work in a group where people need to share responsibilities. However, it is also the duty of superiors to mentor and supervise subordinates about the assignments. If the results do not turn well, it is the superiors' responsibility.

Another interesting point Holmes and Tangtongtavy discuss is that Thai people like to see a clear career path for advancement at work. However, in many joint venture companies, the management level is usually occupied by expatriates.

Several points in Holmes and Tangtongtavy's work provide excellent insights into Thai cultural values at work. A lot of interesting examples and interviews from expatriates working in Thailand and from Thai employees are presented, which help readers to understand these situations better. Nonetheless, some of the explanations are rather simplistic. The book does not cover some of the pertinent aspects, namely gender.

Cross-cultural Communication Studies between Japanese and Thai People

Cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people in relation to the management style of the Japanese has been of major interest among many scholars because a large amount of foreign direct investment in Thailand is from Japan. Most of the research studies are from non-anthropological perspectives, namely the management and behavioral sciences. There has been an academic collaboration between the Japanese Studies Center, Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and Kyoto University. Several symposia have been held on topics in many related areas about the Japanese and the Thais such as management, politics, economics, and religion. Research studies presented in the symposia have been gathered and published in books. The following are some books and articles about cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people working in Thailand.

An interesting article about the implementation of the Japanese management style in Thailand is written by Peter J. Piazza in an article called, "Adapting the Japanese Management Style in Thailand." He explores the Japanese management styles in Thailand with a focus on lifetime employment. He also examines other related elements of lifetime employment, including promotions based on seniority, job rotation, and unwritten job descriptions. Finally, he explains the successes and the failures of the Japanese management styles in Thailand.

First of all, he asserts that the Japanese lifetime employment system does not work well in Thailand because of differences in attitudes and loyalty to the company between the two nations. The Japanese give their first priority to the company; they try to do everything for the success of the company. In return, the company takes very good care of its employees. On the contrary, Thai people give first priority to their family. Job hopping is a common practice among Thai people to gain a higher salary. Piazza (1992) elucidates Thai attitudes towards jobs.

In Thailand, it is a practice both accepted and expected, to pursue a better opportunity: a higher-paying job, a more prestigious company or even a work location closer to home, requiring less time on the bus. (Piazza 1992: 23)

Unlike Japanese companies which try to recruit new graduates and train them to do the job, Thai companies tend to hire job hoppers because they want experienced employees who can work immediately (Piazza 1992).

Due to the failure of the implementation of lifetime employment in Thailand, a Japanese promotion policy based on seniority encounters some difficulties. The Japanese company in Thailand needs to apply some changes to the existing policy from promotions based on seniority to promotions based on merit, instead. Although both Japanese and Thai people value seniority, such promotions based on seniority are not effective in Thailand because potential young Thai employees are not willing to wait so long to gain promotions or higher salary. Usually, the Japanese company in Thailand has to adjust its policy to keep those potential employees. Otherwise, the Thai employees will resign from the company and find a new job because of their high potential and capabilities.

In addition, there are office politics and nepotism in the Thai company in relation to job promotions. Nepotism is common in Thailand, especially in family-run companies. Similarly, nepotism is also found in small companies in Japan. However, nepotism is less practiced in modern and large companies in Japan.

Job rotation is another element of the Japanese management in Thailand.

Piazza explains the purposes of the Japanese job rotation:

In Japan, this practice enables employees to be a part of every department in the company. It gives them an understanding of what happens throughout the company, which ostensibly makes them better managers. (Piazza 1992: 25)

The Japanese view such a practice of job rotation as flexible and useful to employees because they will be able to know jobs and responsibilities of every department. However, the Thais view such job rotations as demotions (Piazza 1992). In Thailand, specialists are more valuable and useful; their career path is prospering.

Furthermore, in Japan, job descriptions seem to be unclear. Usually, there is no written description of a job. However, such a system does not work in Thailand. Thai employees prefer clear job descriptions so that they know the limits and constraints of their duties. Moreover, with a written job description, they can avoid conflicts or confrontation when their duties overlap with their work colleagues.

The next element of the Japanese management which does not work well in Thailand is the Japanese decision-making process by consensus or *ringi*. Such a system works well in Japan because the Japanese value teamwork. If there is any mistake, the whole team needs to take responsibility for it. Nonetheless, Thai people prefer working alone. Piazza (1992: 27) explains, "... Thais are less team-oriented than the Japanese, and are often unwilling to participate in collective decision-making and accept collective responsibility."

Finally, the sense of time and punctuality are discussed. The Thais seem not to be strict with due dates and deadlines. Piazza cites examples of the Japanese adaptation to improve punctuality among Thai workers. For instance, at one company, the Managing Director fines the employees who come to meetings late. Another Japanese company creates slogans to encourage its employees to take a quick action (Piazza 1992).

Piazza eventually concludes that due to differences in attitudes and cultural values between Japan and Thailand, some of the Japanese practices which work in Japan may not work in Thailand. Therefore, the Japanese expatriates need to adjust their policies accordingly. At the same time, Thais should learn to try to understand the Japanese so that they will be able to work together with the Japanese successfully.

All of the topics discussed in Piazza's article are similar to my research study done in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. I think that it is common for the Japanese to encounter some difficulties in implementing their Japanese policies in Thailand because of cultural differences between Japan and Thailand. Results of the Piazza's article can justify many points in my research such as the Japanese industrious characteristics versus the perceived Thai characteristics of being too relaxed at work, as well as lacking a decision-making process, or sense of time.

Chuta Thianthai's research studies published in 1989 and in 1998 are also about the implementation of the Japanese management styles in Thailand, along with Thai perceptions of the Japanese management styles. His research framework is based on Ouchi's Theory Z, including "lifetime employment, slow evaluation and promotion, non-specialized career paths, informal control, collective decision making, collective responsibility, and wholistic concern" (Thianthai 1989: 92).

He conducted his research by sending out questionnaires to managers in Japanese multicultural companies. He then did personal interviews with Japanese managers and Thai employees to gain further details. For his analysis, he combines both data from the questionnaires and the interviews and uses computer programs to group and code the data into tabulations.

He reveals factors inhibiting the full implementation of the Japanese management practices. Those factors can be categorized into three groups. The first group is the external factors, namely economic, social, and political factors. The second group includes the nature of the companies, such as the type of business, the company's size, and length of operation. The last group is the interrelationships

between principal managerial characteristics, which means that “a partial or non-adoption of one factor affects the adoption of another” (Thianthai 1989: 103).

Thianthai comments that lifetime employment is not fully adopted in Thailand because of some different practices in job recruitment in both countries. Unlike in Japan where the company usually recruits new graduates directly from their schools, in Thailand people mainly look for jobs in the newspaper advertisement, which is another factor that encourages job hopping in Thailand.

Because of differences in work experience, education, and the practice of nepotism in Thailand, the Japanese seniority-based system does not work well in Thailand. The Japanese multicultural companies in Thailand tend to use a performance-based system to secure capable employees.

While the Japanese view job rotation as advantageous in providing employees with an opportunity to gain experience in various job positions, Thai employees often view such a practice of job rotation as demotion. Unlike the Japanese who value non-specialized career paths, the Thais prefer job specialization. Thai people tend to look for a job that requires their expertise or relates to their field of studies.

The practice of the Japanese informal control does not work well in Thailand because different relative priorities are given to family and job between the Japanese and the Thais. While the Japanese stress the importance of the after-work-hour activities to discuss work-related matters, Thais do not wish to participate in such activities because they do not think that those activities are part of their job and that they do not want to talk about work. Moreover, Thai employees consider private life and family more important than work. “Thai people do not seek close relations with colleagues and there is no strong sense of participation in the work they do” (Thianthai 1989: 106).

Collective decisions do not work well in Thailand because “Thai people are less work group oriented and they tend to accept status differentiation” (Thianthai 1989: 106). On the contrary, the Japanese tend to work in teamwork; their decision-

making process requires teamwork and group consensus. While the Japanese value collective responsibility, the Thais tend to value individualistic responsibility.

Thianthai points out that Thai people are individualistic while the Japanese value teamwork. The Thais are likely to place greater emphasis on “self” and family where the Japanese can “sacrifice family life for the company” (Thianthai 1989: 108). The Thais also “tend to have the attitude that management is for managers” (Thianthai 1989: 109). Thus, the Thai employees do not participate much in decision-making since they think that such decision-making is a managerial duty.

Language is another barrier to the full implementation of the Japanese management in Thailand. Because English is often used as a common language in the Japanese multicultural companies, the Japanese and the Thais, both of whose native language is not English, may find it difficult to work and communicate in English. This discourages the establishment of close relationships and communication between the Japanese and the Thais.

In his article, “Thai-Japanese: Perception of Managerial Style,” Chuta Thianthai (1998) includes further information about Thai workers’ perceptions of their Japanese managers and the Japanese managers’ perceptions of their Thai workers. He first points out that because of a language problem in the workplace, the Japanese and the Thais are less likely to establish close and pleasant relationships. As a result, the Japanese and the Thais tend to turn to their colleagues from the same nation, instead.

Concerning control issues, namely the delegation of authority and decision-making, the Thais feel that they do not have real authority to make a decision and that the Japanese keep all control. Furthermore, the Thais perceived that sexual discrimination exists in the workplace. Women are less likely to be promoted to higher management positions. Instead, they are usually given less important jobs.

Due to job hopping among Thai employees, the Japanese interpret Thai employees to have no commitment and loyalty to the company, which results in “the Japanese limitation to invest in employee education and training” (Thianthai 1998: 427).

Finally, Thianthai (1989, 1998) concludes that differences in cultural values and priorities have an impact on the implementation of the Japanese management style, as well as on the perceptions of the Japanese and the Thais towards each other. However, he contends that we should not over stress such socio-cultural factors because some of the Japanese management styles work well in Thailand such as quality control, bonuses, and corporate welfare.

Thianthai (1989, 1998) gives some recommendations from his research studies. He suggests that cross-cultural training programs should be provided to the Japanese and the Thais. It is further recommended that the university should include some courses about the Japanese management styles in the curriculum. He also encourages future research on this issue of Japanese management styles in Thailand from different perspectives, namely from the psychological perspective.

Similar to Piazza's work, Thianthai's research studies provide valuable insights into business practices of the Japanese and the Thais which are in conflict. His work also analyzes the successes and the failures of the implementation of the Japanese management style in Thailand. Despite his detailed explanations for such successes and failures of the Japanese business practices, it does not cover some aspects and cultural values in the organization such as gender issues, the sense of time, and the use of power by both Japanese and Thai people. Additionally, his framework based on Ouchi's Theory Z is insufficient in the study of current Japanese organizations because Japanese management style is changing in Japan, which results from changes in attitudes of younger Japanese people and economic recession in Japan. Such changes threaten Japanese managerial styles, namely lifetime employment, since many companies in Japan lay off their employees.

Thai Women

When comparing Thai women with women in other cultures who face severe gender inequality, Thai women, according to Harry W. Gardiner (1991), have equality to Thai men. He explains,

... Thai parents generally do not express any consistent preference for a son or daughter, ... Since neither sex is viewed as weaker or stronger than the other, Thai parents look forward to having children of both sexes. (Gardiner 1991: 176)

The ways female children are brought up have an impact on what a Thai women's life is like. Lifestyles, expectations, education, and careers of Thai girls brought up in rural Thailand may differ from those of Thai girls growing up in Bangkok or in smaller urban areas of the country (Gardiner 1991). In rural Thailand, most of the women give birth at home. Usually, an older sister or other women in the household helps take care of the babies. When the girls grow up, they are expected to serve everybody in the household and do house chores.

On the contrary, in Bangkok and smaller urban areas of Thailand, women from the middle-class and the upper-class families give birth in hospital. After that, women return to work and leave their babies in the care of relatives or servants (Gardiner 1991). Children usually attend school when they reach the age of four years old. Thai women with higher education are likely to earn better social status in the society and to become active in political, economic, and social arenas.

Due to some differences between Thai women growing up in rural Thailand and those growing up in Bangkok and in small urban areas of Thailand, their career paths become different. However, Thai women all contribute to the country's economic growth. The majority of Thai women is more concerned with the social and economic situation of the family than with their own individual economic success because Thai women play an important familial economic role due to the practices of

matrilocality and matrilineality in Thai culture (Gardiner 1991). Harry W. Gardiner (1991) and Mary Beth Mills (1999) elucidate that Thai women, particularly in the rural areas, usually support their family financially. There have been a lot of women from rural Thailand heading to Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, to find a job to support their family by working as laborers. However, this research focuses more on Thai women as white-collar workers.

Recently, women have become more active in political, economic, and business arenas. Many women have come out and called for gender equality in Thai society. Young women nowadays do not accept such an old concept of women being behind men. Numerous women have joined and gained important positions in political and business sectors, including politicians, Managing Directors, and owners of businesses. It seems that their male counterparts are supportive and allow women to gain such equality in the workplace. According to Gardiner (1991), the following are some figures showing women's occupations in Thailand.

... professional workers (39 percent), sales personnel (60 percent), services (44 percent), agriculture (49 percent), production work (30 percent), and other occupations (34 percent). (Gardiner 1991: 184)

Conclusion

Thai cultural values and cultural characteristics from the aforementioned literature help explain Thai subordinates' working styles in Japanese-Thai joint ventures. The literature also elaborates why Japanese management styles do not work well in Thailand. Additionally, in my study, a majority of Thai women working in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand lives in Bangkok or comes from smaller urban areas of the country. They have at least some vocational education. Many of them are of Chinese descent. Since they are usually from the middle-class or the upper-class families, they do not necessarily support their family financially.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY AND PLAN

All data for this research was collected in Bangkok, Thailand. This data was mainly gained from the in-depth interviews. The time frame of the participant observations and the interviews started in the middle of July and finished in the beginning of October 2001.

Research Techniques

Due to the complexity and the uniqueness of cross-cultural communication and cultures, ethnographic methods are an important tool used to examine interactions, lives, attitudes, and perceptions to delve into the cultural values and interactions that underlie communication patterns between groups of people. In this case, the interactions are between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates who share different cultural backgrounds, but work in the same company. In this research, face-to-face interviews and participant observations are conducted to examine cross-cultural communication and relationships between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. In describing the research methodology, some terms may be used interchangeably to refer to the same group of people such as informants and participants.

Participant observation and in-depth interviews are the primary research methods used by anthropologists because such ethnographic methods allow us to learn people's lives and attitudes through their perspectives. Anthropologists stay in the same environment where the informants live. I have decided to implement participant observation and in-depth interviews to collect data because they provide the best descriptions of humans' natures, their interactions, and their attitudes.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a fundamental research method for anthropologists to study people's lives using an emic approach. The fieldworkers need to establish rapport and become "native" to observe their informants as they live their daily lives. At the beginning, the informants may feel uncomfortable with the presence of the fieldworkers. However, the informants later become comfortable as the fieldworkers adjust themselves to the local environment. The fieldworkers should learn to speak the language and try to understand the lives and cultures of the informants as the informants understand their own lives. Still, the fieldworkers need to maintain their objectivity to observe and record lifestyles of the informants. According to H. Russell Bernard (1995: 137), "If you are a successful participant observer you will know when to laugh at what your informants think is funny; and when informants laugh at what you say, it will be because you meant it to be a joke."

I did participant observations of Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates at a Japanese-Thai manufacturer in Bangkok, Thailand, for approximately one month. It was not difficult for me to speak their language and blend in with them since I was working there previously. I usually arrived at the office in the afternoon. I spent time doing observations and interviews for approximately three to four hours a day. It seemed to me that people in the office did not feel disoriented or uncomfortable with my presence. It might be because I was their coworker before. Moreover, it was normal for ex-members to visit and spend time in the office. My colleagues at work told me that Pornpreeya and other colleagues who already resigned from the company usually came back to visit the company and spent time in the office. Pornpreeya is a colleague of mine who resigned from the company about a year after my resignation and finished her degree overseas.

Sometimes I had lunch and dinner with them at a restaurant nearby the office. While I was observing people working in the office, I did some interviews with many of the Japanese, and Thai managers, as well as with Thai subordinates to learn about

their perceptions, attitudes, and relationships with their colleagues at work. After the participant observation process, I took fieldnotes about the informants as well as recording the interviews with them. I also asked for their permission to record the interviews.

In-depth Interviews

To collect data for my research, I mainly utilized “semistructured interviews” (Bernard 1995) because I usually had only one chance to interview some of the informants. Most of my informants were businesspeople; they did not have much time for the interviews. For the “semistructured interviews,” I prepared three different sets of questions for each type of informant – Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates (See Appendix for questionnaires). I used the questionnaires as a guideline for the interviews. In addition, I did “informal interviews” (Bernard 1995) mainly with Thai managers and Thai subordinates during the participant observations. I sometimes went back to some informants to ask them further questions if I was not clear with a certain point.

Questionnaires

There were three sets of questionnaires for the three types of participants – Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates or Thai office workers. The questionnaires were in English, the second language used in most of the Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. All of the participants were able to speak English and communicate in English. Therefore, it was appropriate to use English for the interviews (See Appendix for questionnaires).

All interviews began with some background demographic questions, including age, gender, education, salary, job title, job responsibilities, and how long they have been working for the company. After that, I began the specific research questions by

asking the informants to describe their working experience with superiors or subordinates who came from different cultural backgrounds. Then, the questions were about their relationships with superiors or subordinates. I asked them to provide some examples of pleasant and unpleasant situations with their superiors or their subordinates. I focused on their experience with cultural differences which have made it easy or difficult to work with their superiors or subordinates. After asking the informants about their working relationships, I began to ask them about their informal gatherings or their relationships after working hours. The informants were also asked to describe ideal superiors and subordinates whom they wanted to work with in Thailand. Later, I asked them about their perception of gender in the workplace. For example, I asked whether gender could be a barrier to career advancement or at work. I also asked them to provide reasons for their answers in each case. At the end of the interviews, I asked the informants to give some suggestions to improve the situation for Japanese managers and Thai subordinates working with each other.

Since Thai managers have the chance to work both with Japanese managers and with Thai subordinates, most of their questions included both their experiences and perceptions as being a subordinate to Japanese managers, as well as being a supervisor for Thai subordinates.

Recruiting Informants

To explore the superior-subordinate relationships and cross-cultural communication between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates in joint ventures in Thailand, the important units of analysis in my study are Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates. Japanese managers are Japanese expatriates assigned to work in managerial positions or higher positions in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Thai managers refer to Thais who hold managerial positions and have subordinates under their supervision. Thai subordinates refer to the Thais who are not entitled as managers and work under the supervision of Japanese and/ or Thai

managers. Thai managers and Thai subordinates can be differentiated mainly by their job title and responsibilities.

I began the selection process of informants through previous personal acquaintances. A snowball approach is another method I used to recruit more informants. To begin with, I began recruiting willing informants when I was still in the United States. I sent out e-mails to my work colleagues, whom I knew when I worked at a Japanese-Thai joint venture steel manufacturer in Thailand, and to my friends who were working in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. I explained my research topic to them, its purpose, and the data collection process. I chose to contact my previous work colleagues as informants because they are qualified to be informants. They had work experience in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. I also believed that they could introduce more informants to me as many of them are still working for the company.

At first, I planned to set up a focus-group interview of approximately six Thai office workers who had worked in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. The purpose of this focus group interview was to gain preliminary data to design and adjust my research questions for additional in-depth interviews. I sent an e-mail to request an appointment with them to set up possible dates and times for the focus-group interviews. In the e-mail, I explained to them about the purpose of my research and its process. Nevertheless, I did not receive any reply from any of them at that time. When I went back to Thailand, I tried to set up another appointment for the focus-group interview. Still, it did not work because most of my prospective participants were not available at the same time. Finally, I gave up the process of the focus-group interview.

After the failure of not being able to set up the focus-group interview, I decided to start in-depth interviews because I saw that it was not easy to find a lot of willing participants available at the same time for the focus-group interview. I started to call my former work colleagues and friends to request an appointment with them for the interviews. Some of them were still working for the company at the time of the

interviews; however, some of them had already resigned from the company. I also explained to them about my research, its purpose, and the procedure of the interviews. My work colleagues, business acquaintances, and friends easily agreed and gave me permission to conduct the interviews with them. At first, most of my informants were Thai managers and Thai subordinates.

To gain more participants for the in-depth interviews, I also used the snowball approach. I contacted my friend's father who graciously introduced me to his friend who is an owner of Japanese-Thai businesses in Thailand. He kindly recruited four Japanese managers – Mr. Uchida, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Kobayashi, and Mr. Nishii – for the interviews. I also asked my sister to ask her Japanese and Thai superiors, Mr. Hashiyama and Woraya, because my sister was working for a Japanese-Thai trading company in Thailand at that time. To request the interviews, I sometimes explained to prospective informants about my research during the initial telephone conversation. Mostly, I sent them a facsimile explaining my research study and its process. After the informants agreed to give me interviews, we set up dates and times for the interviews that were most convenient for the informants. I usually interviewed them at their offices. The following are some details of how I recruited the informants for the interviews.

Regarding the Japanese informants, I interviewed ten Japanese managers. Three of them – Mr. Kato, Mr. Yamamoto, and Mr. Mizumoto – were my previous superiors at a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer in Thailand. Thus, I was able to contact them directly for the interviews. For the rest, I contacted them via my various contacts: my sister, my friends, my friend's sister, and my friend's father. Two Japanese managers, Mr. Hashiyama, and Mr. Yamazaki, were the superiors of my sister and my friend's sister respectively; one of the Japanese managers, Mr. Ota, was my friend's classmate. Four Japanese managers – Mr. Uchida, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Kobayashi, and Mr. Nishii – were introduced to me through a connection with a friend of my friend's father.

For the Thai managers, there were six Thai managers – four men and two women. They were my previous superiors, work colleagues, business acquaintances, and my sister's superior. For my former work colleagues, I contacted them directly by e-mail and telephone conversations. For the rest, I contacted them via the introductions by my sister and by my former clients.

For the Thai subordinates, I interviewed 12 office workers – six men and six women. Most of them were my previous work colleagues, and business acquaintances. Some of them were my friends from university. I contacted them by e-mail and telephone conversations. The majority of the Thai subordinates were still working for the companies during the time of the interviews; however, some of them later resigned from the company to further their studies overseas or to change a job.

Participants and Demographics

To understand cross-cultural communication and superior-subordinate relationships between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates from an emic perspective, I interviewed Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates. Japanese managers and Thai subordinates are considered key informants in the study because this research focuses on their relationships. However, it is also crucial to examine Thai managers' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives in their relationships not only with their Japanese superiors, but also with their Thai subordinates. This is because Thai managers often act as a coordinator or a middleman between the two groups of Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. Thai managers have to work in two positions at the same time – one position as a subordinate working under Japanese managers' supervision and the other one as a superior supervising Thai subordinates.

The informants' demographic characteristics are significant to comprehensively understand cross-cultural communication and superior-subordinate relationships between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates because such

characteristics may affect their interactions, perceptions, and worldviews towards each other. There are six important demographic characteristics which should be taken into consideration for the study.

The first demographic characteristic is gender. Since Japan and Thailand are male-dominant societies, superiors may treat male and female subordinates differently. The second one is age. Different age groups may have different communication styles. There might be a gap in communication if the age range of superiors and subordinates is significantly different. The third one is job level or job status. Japanese superiors who have very high job positions may not have a chance to interact often with some Thai subordinates. The fourth one is work experience. People who have more years of work experience may be able to deal with other people more effectively. The fifth one is the Japanese superiors' length of stay in Thailand. The Japanese superiors who have stayed in Thailand for quite a long time may have more opportunity to learn and understand Thai culture and their Thai subordinates. Perhaps, length of time the Thais have worked in a Japanese company in Thailand also contributes to a greater understanding of Japanese culture. The last one is the language ability which includes the general ability to adjust to international and intercultural interactions in a work environment. Those Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates who are open-minded towards new cultures should be able to adjust themselves to learn a new language and to work with each other efficiently. Further research should be conducted to measure such ability in language and cross-cultural adaptation.

Some other variables which perhaps influence cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people include the size of the company, the type of business, and the length of time people have worked in Thailand. However, this research focuses more on cultural aspects of the relationships. Further research should be done to explore other variables affecting other aspects of the relationships.

A total of ten Japanese managers, six Thai managers, and 12 Thai subordinates were interviewed in the study. Some of them were my former work colleagues and

business acquaintances. The informants were from nine different companies of which their business industry is either different or similar. The nine companies include three manufacturing companies, a construction company, and four trading companies. They were all Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand.

To classify the informants as managers, I basically assessed their job titles. If they had job titles equivalent to or higher than a manager and if they were engaged in their company's operations in a management capacity, then they were considered managers. The following is some background information about the informants.

Japanese Managers

A total of ten Japanese managers working for Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand were interviewed (See Table 2). All of them were men in their late 30's to late 40's. It is normal to see that most of the Japanese expatriates in Thailand are males. During the interviews with some Japanese managers, I tried to ask them why I hardly saw a female Japanese expatriate. None of them really gave me a sound reason. They just mentioned that a female Japanese expatriate should be able to speak the local language to be able to work overseas. Later, I learned that it might be because of different expectations and career paths for men and women in Japan. Japanese men should work outside while women are expected to become a housewife and take care of the household and children when they get married. Working away from home, especially overseas, is not common for Japanese women.

Most of the Japanese superiors had been working for the same company for more than 18 years. Only one of them had worked for the company for a lesser time of approximately 13 years. Most of them had had overseas work experience. For example, Mr. Yamazaki had worked for his company for 13 years; he was given overseas assignments to Guam and Singapore before working in Thailand. In addition, most of the Japanese expatriates could speak Thai language to a small extent. Some of them took Thai language lessons while they were working in Thailand. For

instance, my previous superiors, including Mr. Kato, and Mr. Yamamoto studied Thai language in the morning at the workplace.

Table 2: Demographics of Japanese Managers

Japanese Manager	Job Title	Age (yrs)	Gender	Education	Time in Thailand	Time in Japan
Mr. Kato	Manager, Coordination	30-39	Male	Master's Degree	3 yrs and 4 mo.	15 yrs
Mr. Yamamoto	Department Manager	40-50	Male	Bachelor's Degree	4 yrs	16 yrs
Mr. Mizumoto	Department Manager	30-39	Male	Master's Degree	4 yrs	N/A
Mr. Uchida	Section Manager	40	Male	Bachelor's Degree	3 yrs and 8 mo.	14 yrs
Mr. Watanabe	Vice President/ General Manager	45	Male	Bachelor's Degree	1 yr	23 yrs
Mr. Hashiyama	General Manager	42	Male	Bachelor's Degree	5 yrs	20 yrs
Mr. Kobayashi	Department Manager	37	Male	Bachelor's Degree	4 yrs	11 yrs
Mr. Nishii	Vice President	54	Male	Bachelor's Degree	1 yr and 5 mo.	28 yrs
Mr. Ota	Managing Director	44	Male	Bachelor's Degree	5 yrs	15 yrs
Mr. Yamazaki	Director & General Manager	37	Male	Bachelor's Degree	1 yr	12 yrs

Time is calculated until the data collection in summer 2001.

Thai Managers

A total of six Thai managers were interviewed (See Table 3). I interviewed six Thai managers because this research focuses more on the relationships between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. Moreover, there are only a few Thai managers in each company. Most of the managerial positions are reserved for Japanese expatriates.

All of the Thai managers worked under the Japanese superiors' supervision and had their own Thai subordinates. The Thai managers consisted of four men and two women. The four male managers were responsible for marketing and sales while the two female managers were responsible for administrative jobs and sales support. We can see that none of the female managers are assigned to take care of sales jobs. Personally, I have never seen a female sales manager working for Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand.

All of the male managers were in their early 30's while one female manager was in her mid 40's and the other one was in her late 30's. Two of the Thai managers had worked for the Japanese company for more than ten years. One female manager had worked for the same Japanese company for more than 20 years. The rest had worked for the Japanese company for approximately four to eight years. Only one of the male managers, Punrawee, had prior work experience in Japan for a few years; he could understand Japanese language to a certain extent.

Table 3: Demographics of Thai Managers

Thai Manager	Job Title	Age (yrs)	Gender	Education	Time	Japanese Language
Punrawee	Department Manager	30-39	Male	Master's Degree	1-3 yrs	Yes
Korkiat	Assistant Manager	30-39	Male	Master's Degree	4-6 yrs	No
Panudej	Manager	30-34	Male	Bachelor's Degree	10-19 yrs	No
Chaisupat	Senior Assistant Manager	31	Male	Master's Degree	8 yrs	No
Woraya	Deputy General Manager	44	Female	Bachelor's Degree	20-29	No
Preeya	Manager	35-39	Female	Master's Degree	10-14 yrs	No

Time is calculated until the data collection in summer 2001.

Thai Office Workers

A total of 12 Thai subordinates were interviewed for the study (See Table 4). The Thai subordinates consisted of six men and six women. Their age ranged from 25 to 30 years old. Three of them were in their early 20's; another three were in their early 30's. The majority of them just joined the company after they graduated. Some of them gained prior work experience at other companies before joining Japanese-Thai joint ventures. Their work experience varied, ranging from one year to eight years. Most of them had worked for the company for approximately three years.

Concerning their job responsibilities, most of them worked as sales representatives, sales support officers, and service engineers. Only one of them worked in an accounting department. Only four of them learned Japanese language. All of them mainly use English to communicate with their Japanese superiors.

Table 4: Demographics of Thai Office Workers

Thai Subordinate	Job Title	Age (yrs)	Gender	Education	Time	Japanese Language
Soraya	Coordinator	31	Female	Bachelor's Degree	8 yrs	No
Piti	Senior Sales Staff	25-29	Male	Master's Degree	2 yrs	No
Peeraporn	Sales Assistant	23	Female	Vocational School	3-4 yrs	No
Komsun	Coordinator	30-34	Male	Master's Degree	4-6 yrs	No
Preeda	Technical Service Representative	30-34	Male	Master's Degree	4-6 yrs	No
Suwat	Sales Representative	20-24	Male	Vocational School	2-3 yrs	No
Naradee	Sales Representative	25	Female	Bachelor's Degree	4 yrs	Yes
Chalermchai	Sales Representative	23	Male	Bachelor's Degree	2-3 yrs	No
Supansa	Sales Assistant	25	Female	Vocational School	3 yrs and 5 mo.	No
Pornpreeya	Technical Service Representative	25	Female	Master's Degree	2 yrs	Yes
Watana	Financial Officer	25-29	Male	Bachelor's Degree	2-3 yrs	Yes
Supranee	Senior Delivery Control Staff	25	Female	Bachelor's Degree	4 yrs and 3 mo.	Yes

Time is calculated until the data collection in summer 2001.

Interview Procedure

The time and place of the interviews were scheduled at the informants' convenience. I usually conducted interviews in their offices either during or after their official work hours. For some informants, I had interviews with them at a restaurant on the weekends. For instance, I interviewed a Japanese manager, Mr. Ota, who was my friend's classmate after his class at a restaurant nearby. At the time of the interview, he was pursuing his Master's degree in Thailand.

At the beginning of each interview, I first introduced myself, and handed an informed consent form together with a brief description of my research to the informants. Then, I explained the purpose, confidentiality, and anonymity of the study. I also asked for their permission to take notes and use a tape recorder during the interviews.

After the informants agreed to have their interviews tape-recorded and signed the informed consent document, I handed them a questionnaire so that they could better understand the questions which I asked them because the questions were in English. English is not a native language for my informants and me. I began the interviews with some demographic questions to establish some degree of rapport with my informants. After all the demographic questions were covered, I used different sets of questionnaires for each group of the informants – Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai office workers. (See the Appendix for the questionnaires)

Analysis of Data

I transcribed all the tape-recorded interviews. The demographic characteristics and answers of the participants were stored individually under their pseudonyms so that it was convenient to keep track of the information for each individual. Three charts presenting the demographic characteristics of Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates were then created.

From the interviews with the informants, I used coding systems by putting similar responses together and finding patterns in the responses from the informants. Then, I drew out recurrent themes from the answers provided by the informants. All recurrent themes were categorized together into different topics, including concept of work, vertical relationship, authority and supervision style, and gender. Some of their important answers are indicated as quotes in my research report to support the themes.

Limitations with Regards to Methods Used

There are some potential methodological limitations affecting the result of the study. The first limitation is that the sample size was small, so it might be subject to some sampling bias. The informants were from a small range of companies which might not be an adequate sample to represent and draw inferences to all of the Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Nevertheless, the answers and experiences of the informants in this study provided valuable information regarding conflicts and misunderstanding existing in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Perhaps, future research could be done to cover a larger sample of companies in Thailand.

Another potential limitation is time constraints. Because of the time limitation to conduct the research, the researcher might not have had enough time to really establish good relationships and draw out some opinions from the informants. Some informants might have hesitated to share their real opinions about their work colleagues, superiors, and subordinates because of the level of trust with the researcher. I could see that some informants were reluctant to share some of their opinions during the interviews.

Finally, the language problem may have created a limitation in the research study. The interviews were mainly conducted in English. Although all of the informants can speak English fairly well and the English language is a major language in Japanese-Thai joint ventures, the English language is not a native language for any of the informants.

CHAPTER 6: CONCEPT OF WORK

It is not uncommon for one to see, upon entering a sales office of a Japanese-Thai joint venture, a Japanese manager gazing thoughtfully and seriously at heaps of documents on his desk. One will also usually discern, on the other hand, that Thai subordinates and their colleagues seem to enjoy conversations and spending a good time at work. The aforementioned differences might cause several questions to arise on one's mind. For example, one might wonder whether laziness is Thai people's nature, and whether it is the Japanese's nature to be industrious. If considered from a cultural point of view, such situations should be analyzed using a holistic approach. Comprehension of their cultural values and work ethics is necessary and indispensable, especially for those from different cultural backgrounds, and with it comes a better understanding of their working behaviors and reactions.

The purpose of this study is to explore the superior-subordinate relationship between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. The study focuses on Japanese management styles and Thai subordinates' reactions. Furthermore, cultural adaptation of Japanese expatriates and local Thai subordinates is also examined.

Based upon a collection of interviews with Japanese superiors, Thai superiors as well as Thai subordinates, numerous similarities and differences can be seen in terms of the cultural values of each group. However, conflicts and misunderstandings still exist in those joint ventures. It might be because people usually have some negative stereotypes of other people with different cultures. Those stereotypes can be developed to myths. When people from different countries interact, they may have certain mindsets or stereotypes of other people, which leads to conflicts and misunderstandings.

Divided into two parts, the findings demonstrate and elucidate, in the first part, four important themes in relation to cross-cultural management style of the Japanese

superiors' and the Thai subordinates' reactions. The four themes are: (1) the concepts about work, (2) vertical relationship between superiors and subordinates, (3) authority and supervision style, and (4) gender. The second part thoroughly explains the cross-cultural adaptation of the Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, and also explores the factors affecting such adaptation.

Concept of Work

A concept of work is one of the most important cultural values because it helps shape the ways in which people act and work in the office. Different cultures may share work concepts, which can contribute to job satisfaction of people in the same company. However, work concepts might be in conflict, in which case difficulties in working cooperatively will be encountered. When people with diverse cultural backgrounds come into contact, it is vital for them to be cognizant of such differences so as to perform satisfactory and successfully at work. It is very interesting to find that not withstanding several similar cultural values shared by Japan and Thailand, concepts of work and expectation differ considerably.

Characteristics: Diligence and Laziness

Regarding Japanese historical backgrounds and cultural values, working hard is one of the most important Japanese characteristics and values. In the Tokugawa period, the government banned all activities with foreign countries because Japan feared that foreign trade and interaction could be dangerous to the stability of the nation. Due to the long and continual period of the isolation, Japan has developed a sense of self-identity. Japanese people began to rely more on their own resources. After the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate, the new government under the Meiji Emperor restored the country economically and politically. The Western models were introduced to several areas such as industrial, and military sectors. Meanwhile, the

government also realized that it was essential to instill “Japanese spirit” and patriotism into its people. After the long isolation from the outside world and its economic success, Japanese people learned that they had to rely on themselves although their country is just an island country with a few resources. Working hard and lengthy working hours became their values to sustain the country’s economic growth (Nishiyama 2000; Rosenberger 2001).

From my experience, Japanese people are well known because of their industrious and hard working characteristics. Some also regards Japanese people to be workaholic because they have long working hours and much emphasis is placed on work. From my work experience with the Japanese, according to most of the Japanese superiors, the first priority at work is to finish work on time and to achieve the company’s goal. Employees should look serious and concentrate mainly on their job assignments. They should neither play nor eat at work. The lengthy working hours of the Japanese also reflects how diligent and assiduous they are. The Japanese expatriates usually stay in the office until late at night to finish their job assignments while Thai employees might do so at home or postpone it until the following day. Gercik (1996) cites several case studies in which the non-Japanese need to work hard and stay at work after working hours to show their commitment to the company or to their work group.

From the interviews, Mr. Yamamoto and Mr. Kato, Japanese managers at a sales office of the Japanese-Thai joint venture, and Punrawee, a Thai manager at the same office, described how they view the Japanese and the Thais at work. They mentioned that while the Japanese were very industrious and serious at work, Thai subordinates seem to be relaxed or *Sabai Sabai*. It is very interesting that Mr. Kato, a Japanese manager and Punrawee, a Thai manager working at the same office as Mr. Kato gave similar environmental explanation as a cause of Thai characteristic of *Sabai Sabai* at work. They elucidated that unlike Japan’s historical backgrounds and geography, Thailand has a warmer climate. Food is available all year round; Thai people do not have to worry about the food shortage. They do not have to stock up

food for winter. There is a Thai proverb, saying that “*Nai Num Mee Pla Nai Na Mee Kao.*” It means that in the water fish are plentiful and so is rice in the rice fields. It is a good example reflecting the Thais’ *Sabai Sabai* characteristic. Thai people, thus, are likely to be relaxed when it comes to work.

To the Thais, *Sabai Sabai* literally means being relaxed or not being serious. This concept is also valued not only in the workplace but also in everyday life. Since Thai people try to avoid confrontation or stress at all cost, they want people to be relaxed and not take things too serious. Nonetheless, it does not mean that Thai people are not serious about their work. Japanese expatriates often used the words, *Sabai Sabai*, to describe Thai people as being laid back or lazy. However, *Sabai Sabai* does not carry a sense of laziness in its meaning.

Mr. Kato, a coordination manager at a Japanese-Thai joint venture, gave his definition when he mentioned the word *Sabai Sabai*. He said, “*Sabai Sabai* refers to a lack of preciseness and carefulness in checking their work.”

From the interviews, we can see that both Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates tend to use environmental influences to explain industrious and laid-back characteristics of each group at work. I think the Japanese and the Thai managers tend to use such environmental explanations because both countries are mainly based on agriculture. A Rice growing ceremony is important for both nations; such a ceremony is a basis of cultural beliefs and values of both countries. Similar to the Thai culture of cultivating rice, in Japan, rice cultivation is also an important practice from which Japanese self-identity and beliefs have been drawn (Hendry 1995). However, it does not mean that they have to share all similar cultural concepts because their countries have been through different historical, economic, and political situations, which can bring about different worldviews.

Mr. Kato, a Japanese manager, used environmental influences to elucidate Japanese industrious characteristics and Thai people’s nature at work as being relaxed. He explained that due to different climates, the Japanese need to be diligent to stock up food for winter while the Thais do not have to.

The Japanese are used to making a plan; however, Thai people are not used to making a plan. For Japan or other Northern hemisphere countries even the United States, there is no food in winter. So, they have to be prepared in summer how much food they need for winter. On the other hand, Thai people do not need this because they have food available all year round. That is the big difference. Japanese people want to be perfect. If something happens, they do not want to starve to death. They want to make sure that things are perfect and well planned. While the Japanese go for "perfection," Thai people are happy with just, "it is ok." Just being *Sabai Sabai*. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager at the same company as Mr. Kato, also cited environmental factors in explaining Japanese and Thai characteristics at work.

It is different here in Thailand. One big difference is that one man who is very lazy can survive in Thailand. Basically, he sleeps under the tree and he can get bananas. On the other hand, a lazy person cannot live in Japan. In Thailand it is easy to get food. So, the driving force of work is not so strong in Thailand. People are *Sabai Sabai*. (Mr. Yamamoto)

Likewise, Punrawee, a Thai manager who had prior experience of studying and working in Japan, and Chalermchai, a Thai sales representative at the same joint venture as Punrawee, referred to some environmental and historical factors to explain why the Japanese are industrious and the Thais seem to be laid back.

There is less pressure when compared to Japanese company. In the past, Thailand's economy was good. Thai people did not need to work hard; they worked as *Sabai Sabai* as they could. They were not starving like those people in Indonesia. People in Thailand have less economic pressure. Thai people go out to lunch and come back to work late. It is *Sabai Sabai*; they are not in hurry. Because of different historical backgrounds, Japan and Thailand have different levels of pressure. Thai people have plenty of food for all year round. Japanese people

have to manage everything carefully. They do not have a lot of natural resources. After World War II, they went through innumerable difficulties. They became strong and diligent. These characteristics were instilled in the Japanese since they were young. From such reasons, Japanese managers may have high standards for working and high expectations for their Thai subordinates such as punctuality. (Punrawee)

Chalermchai, a Thai sales representative, cited historical backgrounds as explanation to Japanese industrious characteristics at work. He said,

The Japanese devote themselves to work. They often work until late such as after midnight in the office. They work hard probably because they get higher salary. Men usually go out, work, and support their family financially. So, they have incentive to work harder than Thai staffs. The effect of World War II may influence the Japanese as well. They have become tougher and worked harder. They need to rebuild their country after World War II. On the other hand, Thai lifestyle is more relaxing and *Sabai Sabai*. Thai people seem to be lazy because they have had peaceful life. Japanese people focus on job and family while the Thais focus more on personal life, playing and having fun with friends. (Chalermchai)

Other Japanese managers also provided more explanations of different cultural values supporting their notion of Thai dominant characteristic of *Sabai Sabai* at work. Mr. Watanabe, an experienced Japanese expatriate who has worked in several countries and seen different working styles of people with diverse cultural backgrounds, compared different lifestyles of the Japanese and the Thais and emphasized Japanese industrious characteristics and Thai laid back nature.

In Japan, staff work seriously everyday. After work, they go back straight to the house or enjoy the party. But, in Thailand, it is a different case. Thai people do not want to be serious; they want to be *Sabai Sabai* even though the job

is very tough and hard. They want to work as *Sabai* as possible. (Mr. Watanabe)

Mr. Ota, a managing director who has had overseas working experience also gave an interesting instance of the Thais being *Sabai Sabai* at work.

The Thai staff sometimes use the office telephone a lot. The lines are always busy. Thai staff always mix their business and personal lives. I do not understand such a situation because it never happens in Japan. In Japan, if subordinates want to make phone calls, they will go outside to the public phone or use their mobile phone. So, in Indonesia and China, the companies lock the phone because they do not trust some staff that they might use the phone for their personal matter. (Mr. Ota)

From the above opinions of the Japanese and the Thai managers and that of the Thai subordinate, we can see that both the Japanese and the Thais seem to reinforce a stereotype or myth about each other as they drew some explanations of each characteristic from some environmental and historical factors. I think most of the people in Thailand view Japanese people as industrious and workaholic. People tend to believe that World War II is one of the causes forcing the Japanese to work hard to recover their country from the war.

However, different cultural values and beliefs are also significant factors to produce different ways of acting between the Japanese and the Thais. Gercik's examples of employees at Japanese companies working hard after hours to show their commitment and loyalty to the company is a good instance to illustrate an impact of the cultural value on people's way of acting (Gercik 1996). On the other hand, the Thais tend to work at a slower pace. They tend to integrate having fun while working to lessen stressful atmosphere at work because the Thais try to avoid any conflict and confrontation at any cost.

From the interviews, several Japanese managers I interviewed gave me an impression that subordinates should be serious at work and that they should not play at

work, including setting up a birthday party. Japanese managers cited some interesting situations which might help shape their attitudes towards their Thai subordinates as being too laid back at work. The first example is that Thai subordinates brought a birthday cake to their manager on their Japanese manager's birthday. However, Japanese managers seemed not to be very much satisfied with the situation as they explained below.

Mr. Uchida, a section manager of the joint venture, told me that his subordinate surprised him with a cake on his birthday. Nevertheless, he explained that such a surprise is acceptable to do after working hours.

A lady staff remembered my birthday and prepared a cake for me in the office for my section only. In Japan, there is no such a case. It is not acceptable to do so in the office during office hours. However, it is ok for after hours. (Mr. Uchida)

Mr. Yamazaki, a Japanese manager at a Japanese trading company, told the same story of his staff preparing a birthday cake for him in the office. He was reluctant to comment the Thais. He just simply said that he appreciated their kindness in celebrating his birthday. Yet, when I asked if this was common in Japan, he denied and said that it never happened in Japan.

From the above example, although socializing is important for both countries, appropriateness of time and place should be taken into consideration. For Thai subordinates, it is acceptable to celebrate birthday at work, especially after working hours. On the other hand, Japanese superiors may prefer to do so outside the office after working hours since it is not appropriate to have a party in the workplace while employees in other sections are still working.

Another example which surprised a Japanese manager and made him think that Thai people are not serious at work is that Thai subordinates spend working hours eating snack and chatting with their colleagues. Mr. Ota, a Japanese managing director, described his Thai subordinates that they enjoy having snack all the time.

I am surprised that Thai people enjoy eating *Kanom* (Thai word for snack) every time, even in the office. In Japan, they eat only at lunchtime and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Between those times, they don't eat while they're working. I understand that it's Thai culture; I do not want to intervene that much. (Mr. Ota)

From the two situations, it is not surprising that the Japanese and the Thais developed some stereotypes or myths about each other because of their different practices, strategies as well as appropriateness of time and place to do a certain thing. They may also have different priority when it comes to work matter. Unlike Japanese people who place much emphasis and priority on work, Thai people tend to consider personal life to be the center of their identities. Their work time and fun time can be mixed; they feel comfortable with it. During working hours, the Thais may expect fun. "They work at play and play at work" (Leppert 1996: 69). It is common for the Thais to socialize, and run errands during working hours.

In conclusion, as far as all of the above answers are concerned, we can see that both the Japanese and the Thais recognize their different work concepts and characteristics of each other at work. The Japanese understand that Thai people value the concept of *Sabai Sabai*. Thai people do not want to rush themselves; nor do they wish to put themselves under pressure. This is because their pace of life tends to be slower than that of the Japanese. Meanwhile, Thai managers and subordinates understand that owing to World War II and a lack of food in the winter, Japanese people became more industrious. They need to ensure that they would be able to survive and that they had enough food.

In addition, from the interviews, both Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates believe that environmental factors and historical backgrounds mainly influence the nature of people in both countries. Environmental and historical influences may not be sufficient to explain cultural differences at work for Japanese and Thai people because their cultures are influenced by other factors such as societal values, religious beliefs, political systems, and western influences.

Problem Solving

Problem solving and length of time taken to solve a problem are different in Japanese and in Thai cultures. It is the second area where they encounter misunderstandings and conflicts. Most of the Japanese managers complained such slow problem solving process of the Thais as an unsatisfying situation at work. The process each cultural member uses to solve a problem needs to be taken into consideration. In this part, a problem solving method of the Japanese and the Thais as well as their expectations from each other are explored.

As superiors, the Japanese usually expect their subordinates to solve the problem immediately; they often wonder why their subordinates do not take any action to solve the problem at once. On the other hand, the subordinates usually encounter some difficulties which hinder them from solving the problem quickly. Worse than that, they do not know how to inform their superiors about such difficulties. Eventually, both parties may have misunderstandings about each other.

To understand the misunderstandings and conflicts between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in the process of problem solving, we need to examine what both parties say about this matter. To begin with, Japanese managers complained about their Thai subordinates' delay in problem solving. The managers expected quick action to be taken by their subordinates. When Thai subordinates did not take any action to solve the problem, Japanese managers thought that their Thai subordinates tried to run away from the problem.

In one situation, Japanese superiors complained that their Thai subordinates did not take quick action to solve a problem. The Japanese managers assumed that their subordinates tried to run away from the problem. On the other hand, the subordinates claimed that they usually encountered some difficulties hindering them from solving the problem quickly.

First, I will give the Japanese managers' points of view. Mr. Watanabe, a vice president and general manager of a Japanese trading firm, pointed out that he wanted

his subordinates to take action quickly. He often did not understand why his subordinates could not complete the job on time. He tried to solve the problem by assigning a due date for each task. Mr. Watanabe said,

Sometimes I prefer quick action or quick decision from my subordinates. I want them to do a job immediately. Yet, the action is not taken in time. For instance, there was a target to achieve. Although they understood what I wanted, they were still *Cha Cha* or slow. I wanted them to do it right away, but they did not do so. I wonder why they did not take action right away even though they wanted to achieve such a goal. So, I need to ask my subordinates when and how, and instruct the due date. (Mr. Watanabe)

Mr. Uchida, a section manager of a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer, observed that Thai staff members tended to avoid the problem. Unlike his staff in Japan who usually consulted with each other to solve a problem, his Thai subordinates seemed to take no action for any problem. Mr. Uchida elucidated,

In Japan each person is responsible to do a job. However, Thai people's responsibility is not the same as responsibility of the Japanese. For example, in Japan, when people have a problem, they try to solve their problem immediately maybe by consulting with others. However, in Thailand people don't try to solve the problem. They run away from their troubles. (Mr. Uchida)

Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of the administration department of a Japanese trading firm, believed that his Thai subordinates tended to avoid a problem because they were afraid that they might lose their job. He said,

Thai staff tend to avoid trouble. They are afraid to lose a job. That is why they do not try to make a job effective. I requested my subordinate to prepare a job flow chart one year ago, but then it has not yet been completed. My subordinate claimed that it was difficult to finish it. I just

asked her to prepare a manual, including the job flow chart, for newcomers. (Mr. Kobayashi)

On the other hand, for the Thais, they think that they should try to solve the problem by themselves first before approaching their superiors because it seems incompetent for them if they report the problem to their superiors right away without trying to solve the problem by themselves first.

From the interviews with the subordinates, we can see that misunderstandings can come from the different problem-solving process and from the communication problem. The superiors want their subordinates to take actions to solve the problem immediately. However, when the subordinates encounter problems, the subordinates are reluctant to inform their superiors or consult with them directly because the subordinates do not want to be considered as incapable.

Interviews with the Thai managers indicate that they are likely to solve a problem by themselves before approaching their Japanese superiors because of their management position and responsibility. They are supposed to be able to handle the problem accordingly. The following are Thai managers' remarks about how they deal with the problems.

Panudej, a Thai manager of a Japanese trading company, said,

At first, I try to solve the problem by myself using my own experience. If it is a big problem, I will consult with my boss. I have to learn my boss' characteristics to please him. (Panudej)

Korkiat, a Thai manager of Sales Department of a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer, said,

When I have a problem, I will usually solve the problem with my Japanese superior by informing him to solve the problem together. I will not keep the problem. Japanese bosses want staffs to inform them immediately of the problem. Before that, staff should analyze the problem and

prepare some solutions first. The staff sometimes inform the problem by e-mail to show responsibility. (Korkiat)

We can see that Thai managers are likely to try to solve a problem by themselves before approaching their Japanese superiors because of their management position and responsibility. They are supposed to be able to handle the problem to some extent since they are promoted to be a manager. It may not be the same case to Thai subordinates since some of them do not have prior work experience. They, thus, need some guidance when a problem occurs.

During the interviews, the subordinates were questioned how they solve a problem and how they approach their superiors when a problem occurs. Thai subordinates elaborated both satisfying and unsatisfying experience from problem solving and dealing with their superiors when a problem arose. Some were happy with their superiors being open-minded and willing to help them solve the problem. Others encountered superiors who showed frustration. Thai subordinates answered how they dealt with the problems. Noradee, a Thai sales representative at a Japanese-Thai joint venture, said,

I would first consider if I should solve the problem by myself or consult with my superior because he sometimes becomes frustrated easily. So, I should find the solution before asking him for further suggestion. (Noradee)

Supranee, a senior delivery control staff, answered,

When I have a problem, I will talk to my boss. If the problem is about the job, I will try to solve it by myself first. I will consult with my boss if I cannot solve the problem. My Japanese boss is open-minded and gives subordinates a chance to talk and approach him. (Supranee)

We can also see that Thai subordinates would try to solve a problem by themselves before consulting with their Japanese superiors. This might be because they need to show their attempt, competence, and responsibility to try to solve the problem first. Moreover, from the conversations with the two Thai subordinates, Noradee and Supranee tended to have good relationship with their Japanese superiors to some extent. They were not afraid to approach their superiors. However, as I observed, Thai subordinates would prefer consulting with their superiors for guidance even though they felt that they should not do so.

Therefore, to understand the above situation, some cultural backgrounds of both countries should be taken into consideration. Because of the Japanese people's value in cooperation and collectivism, the Japanese business management is known as "management by consensus" (Otsubo 1993: 234). To solve a problem, the Japanese usually discuss it in the meeting; the solution should be reached with consensus from the group. Such a meeting process is considered time consuming for non-Japanese people, especially when a quick action needs to be taken to solve the problem.

On the other hand, for Thai people, Buddhism influences such a process of problem solving. According to Buddhism, suffering or problem is caused by one's previous karma or action in the past life; nothing can be done to change it. He/ she should do good deeds so that his/ her next life will become better. Thus, when a problem occurs, Thai people are likely not to solve the problem quickly. Or, the problem might be left undone. They believe that time can help rectify any mistake. People sometimes believe that there is no feasible solution to some problems. Thus, when there is a problem, Thai subordinates with such a worldview in their mind seem to be slow in finding a solution to the problem or even seem to run away from the problem.

Japanese "management by consensus" and Thai propensity to let time solve problems might be some factors influencing their problem solving methods. In the business context, different values are imposed since businesspeople need to compete with time and space to gain competitive edge in the global market. Thus,

businesspeople may not attach to their cultural values since they need to compete with other people.

After interviewing Thai subordinates to find out why they were slow in solving a problem, I found out that religious belief and cultural background might not be sufficient to understand the situation. There are some other interesting factors causing a delay in the problem solving procedure as follows.

First of all, Thai subordinates claimed that their Japanese superiors gave a lot of assignments; it is almost impossible for them to finish all the assignments within designated due dates. I had such experience before when I worked for a Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand. My Japanese superiors gave me numerous assignments although they knew that I had a lot of work to do. They also instructed certain deadlines for each task. Since I realized that I could not finish all of the assignments, I decided to do it at my comfortable pace. I did not care about the designated deadlines because I felt that my superiors did not care about me. Even though they knew that I already had a lot of work to finish, they gave me those assignments. This situation also occurred to some of the Thai subordinates I interviewed. Chalermchai's comment on this issue is a good example to explain such a situation. Chalermchai, a sales representative at my previous company, joined the company after I resigned. He elucidated,

My Japanese boss gives me a lot of assignments within certain deadlines. It is very difficult to finish them. So, I gradually do the assignments as I possibly could. My superior always complains to me about this. I think we need more communication to understand each other and how to organize priority of work. About problem solving, when I have a problem and want to consult with my boss, I need to figure out some solutions and ideas before talking to him. (Chalermchai)

Second, most of the subordinates usually find out a solution to a problem before approaching their superiors. Misunderstandings may occur because of such a

process since the process of finding a solution may take time. While the Japanese superiors expected to see an action taken to solve a problem, Thai subordinates were thinking carefully about the solution and how to present it to their superiors. Most of the subordinates were afraid to approach their Japanese superiors because the subordinates might not be able to communicate in English and present the solution to the superiors. Some were afraid that their solution might not be approved. Thus, the subordinates take considerably long time to present some solutions to the superiors. From my experience, when there was a problem, I took time to find a sound solution and reasons to support it. Such a process often took time since I had to make sure that I was ready to present the perfect and feasible solution to my Japanese boss.

Third, Thai subordinates think that their Japanese superiors are reluctant to give them any advice because the superiors do not want to take responsibility for their suggestion. This issue is important since it may affect trust between the two groups. Preeda, a technical service engineer, gave some comments about this.

Japanese bosses usually do not give advice when subordinates have a problem because the Japanese do not want to take responsibility of such advice. Usually, subordinates try to solve the problem by themselves first. My boss should share with subordinates any information or any decision made. For instance, when a customer asked if the company could produce with a particular specification, my Japanese boss did not answer that question immediately. That slowed down the process because I could not give any answer to the customer right away. Then, my boss became frustrated with my slow action. I feel that my boss was afraid that he would need to take responsibility to what he would answer, so he had to check his answer again and again. That process is time-consuming. When the problem arises, my Japanese boss would say that he didn't know about that and then he wouldn't need to take any responsibility. On the other hand, at my previous company, if a problem arises, no matter who causes such a problem, everybody will brainstorm to solve the problem together. I am happy with it that way. (Preeda)

From Preeda's remarks about his superiors not helping him solve the problem and not covering him, I think such misunderstandings might come from both differences in problem solving styles, the individual's responsibility and way to solve a problem. I knew his Japanese superior and once worked with him. His Japanese superior usually took some time before he said something; silence was common when I had conversations with him.

Another factor is that Thai subordinates claimed that Japanese managers always have a meeting. It always takes a long time to reach a consensus and come up with some solutions. They think that this is not practical for business management. The meeting is a waste of time since they think that the Japanese hold too many meetings without really reaching any solution or agreement. On the contrary, for the Japanese, the meeting is important since people need to reach consensus before taking any action to a particular problem or plan. The Japanese value in teamwork, so they need to make sure that everybody agrees with the solution or the action to be taken. Some comments from the Thai subordinates are as follows.

Soraya, a Thai coordinator, replied,

It takes time for Japanese to make a decision. They often have a meeting. It always takes a long time to reach an outcome. They usually list down all topics and objectives of the meeting. This is a good point. However, they always have a delay in decision-making. The Japanese want to share responsibility so they need consensus in the meeting. They always ask around for each topic to reach agreement on one decision. Japanese managers are afraid to make a decision and to be responsible for such a decision themselves so they need to ask around. (Soraya)

Preeda, a technical service engineer explained that more meetings were held in his current company. He elucidated,

My previous company did not have meetings that often. Subordinates were given power to make a decision. At my current workplace, there are a lot of meetings every day; we do not reach any solution. So, it seems to me that it is always a waste of time. The meeting is never productive.
(Preeda)

Therefore, conflicts and misunderstandings exist in the above situations because Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates have different ways to deal with problems, resulting in different expectations from the other party. The Japanese managers prefer quick actions while Thai subordinates are overwhelmed with too many assignments and difficulties from problems which they do not know how to solve.

Unclear Job Descriptions and Responsibilities

Unclear job description is the third area of misunderstanding and conflict between the Japanese and the Thais. In Japan, job description is less precise; overlapping job responsibilities are possible. Employees are expected to do a task beyond their titled responsibility; they are sometimes rotated to do a job in other sections or departments. It is advantageous for the Japanese to have such a rotation system since they can find a substitute for a person who resigns from the company. However, such a practice of unclear job description is not common in Thailand. In Thailand, job descriptions and responsibilities are more precise; they are listed in the employment contract. Employees need to understand such a contract before they start the job. They are likely to be uncomfortable when they are assigned to do a job beyond their responsibility since it may overlap others' responsibility and cause conflict and confrontation between them and their colleagues who are responsible to that task. Many Thai subordinates complained about unclear job description and responsibility as follows.

Preeya, an administration manager, narrated her confusion in her job responsibilities which sometimes overlapped with those of other departments. She replied,

Job assignment is often overlapped, resulting in confusion and less effectiveness in job. I did not complain to my boss unless he complained to me first. Job description is not clear. (Preeya)

Chalermchai, a sales representative, showed his frustration since he had to do administrative jobs even though he was hired to be a sales representative. He said,

I was entitled as a Sales Representative. However, I have to take care of some administrative assignments such as reimbursing some money for my boss and sending out checks to pay the office rent. I even have to serve tea to customers and run some small errands. At the same time, I have to take care of sales job. (Chalermchai)

Supansa, a sales assistant at the same company as Chalermchai. She was my assistant when I worked at the Japanese-Thai joint venture. She complained that she was often given tasks beyond her responsibilities, which overwhelmed her and cause her some constraints.

My boss sometimes assigned me a job other than my responsibility and I feel overwhelmed. He should give me assignments within my responsibility. Some Japanese superiors do not explain why they assign me to do a particular job. For example, as a sales assistant, I have responsibility and authority to a certain extent. However, the Japanese managers sometimes asked me to get some information. It is difficult for me to have an access to such information because of my job title. The managers do not understand that I have some constraints. They should have asked a sales representative to do such a job, instead. (Supansa)

Lifetime Employment, Commitment to Company and Resignation

Commitment to the company and resignation are another important issue in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. From interviewing numerous Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand, Japanese managers complained about their subordinates' resignation and commitment to the company. In Japan, people usually work at the same company for a long time, especially those working for a large organization; they do not change job often. Thus, it is not surprising that Japanese employees have developed strong commitment to their organizations. Although the trend of lifetime employment in Japan has changed, job hopping can be seen in Japan. On the other hand, in Thailand, job-hopping is common. Some Thais changed job often because they want to gain higher salary and promotion at a new company.

From interviewing with the Japanese about employees' turnover rate, Japanese managers complained about a lot of Thai staffs' resignation and their commitment to the company. All of the Japanese managers I interviewed have worked for the same company since they graduated from the university. The average length of time they have worked for the company is approximately 20 years; their average age is about 30 to 40 years old. These statistics show that Japanese people from such a generation usually work for the same company for a long time. On the other hand, the trend of lifetime employment has changed to a certain extent in Japan as we can see from the comments from the Japanese managers below.

Three Japanese managers elucidated Japanese values in terms of lifetime employment and employees' commitment to the company. Mr. Uchida, a section manager at a Japanese-Thai joint venture, expressed his surprise that the Thais tended to change job often even though they just entered the company. He said,

I am surprised that that a lot of staffs resign quickly (6 months-1 year) and change job quickly. To do work properly, people need to gain experience. If people just work for only 6 months or a year and change the job, it's not good for the company and the customers because the

company needs to restart and train a new employee again. In Japan in the past, people value lifetime employment; people work for one company for their lifetime. However, the trend is now changing. (Mr. Uchida)

The following is my conversation with Mr. Hashiyama, a general manager of a Japanese trading company. He explained the lifetime employment in Japan and gave reasons which caused high turn over rate of the employees in his current workplace.

Mr. Hashiyama first explained, "Lifetime employment is very common. The company educates employees right after they graduated. It is pretty much about on-the-job training. It is very common for Japanese culture that the company hires new graduates and trains them. The trend is changing." In addition, after I asked him why many employees have resigned from the company, he replied, "At the beginning they don't want to work for the company for a long time. But, they just want to work for the company for a while as a step before furthering their studies or before changing to a new job." He further elucidated that Japanese culture is very unique, especially in the big company. He joined his current company right after he graduated. Then, he worked with friends graduating at the same time; they worked and competed at the same time. Because he has a chance to work for a big company, people value lifetime employment. Therefore, they're provided with very intensive training. They gained tough experiences. The good result can be seen after 5-10 years. In a small company, the situation may be very different; people may change job.

Mr. Ota, a managing director of a manufacturer, complained about frequent resignation of Thai employees in comparison with Japanese employees in Japan. He said,

Thai staff resigns often after gaining job training; in Thailand some employees, after they are sent to attend a training program at a plant in Japan, apply for a job in a new company to gain more salary. Such a situation happened before 1996; at that time, the company had to give a lot of incentives. That was before the economic recession in Thailand. From 1989 to 1994 it was also tough

for the company to maintain employees. But, in Japan they were confident that the new employees would work for the company because they had special contract with them (i.e., after they are back from the training, they have to work for a certain period of time.) So, we should set such a contract to maintain our employees. (Mr. Ota)

Other Japanese managers also provided a current trend regarding lifetime employment and commitment to the company for Japanese people in the new generation. In addition, they gave some interesting reasons and perspectives of the employment in Japan nowadays. One of the important reasons of the change in the trend is that because of the economic recession in Japan, the company cannot offer retirement pension or any benefits to employees. Thus, the employees have less incentive to work at a company for their entire career life.

The following are some comments from Japanese managers about the current trend of employment of the Japanese companies. Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of the administration department of a Japanese trading firm, explained,

In the past, lifetime employment is valued. Now the company has to change. The company can't provide retirement pension. (Mr. Kobayashi)

Mr. Watanabe, a vice president and general manager of a Japanese trading company, said,

Recently, Japanese companies never really care about personal life of their staffs. The old style companies take care of their staffs until they resign. Now things change. Job-hopping tends to be common in Japan. Japanese management tries to solve such a problem. Still, sometimes they allow this to happen. Meanwhile, job-hopping results in increasing cost of training new employees. (Mr. Watanabe)

Mr. Yamazaki, a director and general manager of a manufacturing company gave his opinion about lifetime employment in Japan and its current trend,

Lifetime employment: In Japan people used to value this.
Now it's changing maybe because of economic downturn.
People quit the job and get pension. (Mr. Yamazaki)

While the Japanese managers believed that the Thai subordinates did not have strong commitment to work for a company and that they tended to change job often to gain higher salary and benefits at a new company, after interviewing with Thai subordinates, I learned that the Thai subordinates did not really state the problems of their resignation. Instead, they gave their perspective on Japanese lifetime employment. The subordinates thought that such a system worked in Japan because the Japanese had higher salary and benefits at work. Thus, the Japanese were satisfied with the job and did not need to change the job often.

Chalermchai, a sales representative, gave his understandings about Japanese lifetime employment. He thought that the Japanese tended to stay longer in one company because of higher salary and incentives. He replied,

The Japanese value lifetime employment. It is probably because of different structures of salary so they have incentives to work for one company for a long time. They will get high pension after they are retired. Yet, the Thai may not have such a system. (Chalermchai)

Noradee, another sales representative, showed her agreement with Chalermchai's reasons about Japanese lifetime employment. She added that the Thais concentrated on good relationships at work. She explained,

If they believe in this system (lifetime employment) and want to use it in Thailand, they should have more incentives for Thai staffs. Thai people tend to give importance more to job satisfaction or feeling *Sabai Jai* at

work and *Kwam Pen Gun Eng*, which results from personal relationship with bosses. (Noradee)

Concerning the trend of Thai employment, it is quite similar to that of the Japanese to some extent. For most of the Thai management level I interviewed, the older generation of Thai people was not likely to change a job often. All of the Thai managers from the age of more than 30 years old usually have worked for the same company since they graduated from the university. However, for the new generation of the Thais at the age of 20s, they tend to change a job or have some idea about changing job. Another alternative that the new generation of the Thais tend to do is to further their studies after working for a company for a few years. Furthering studies is another trend which may affect Thai employment, turnover rate of employees, and commitment to the company.

From my experience and the interviews from my work colleagues who already resigned from the company, some of us, including myself, resigned from the company to further our studies since we believe that a Bachelor's degree might not be sufficient to qualify us for a better job in the future. We need more educational credentials. On the contrary, some work colleagues of mine found another job after their resignation; they claimed that their new job gave them more job satisfaction and related to their field of study or met their interest. Later, they would further their studies. Some of them took another degree while they were working for the job.

Implications for Resignation

From Thai subordinates' comments, there could be two implications for the high turnover rate of the employees. First of all, Thai people change job often so as to gain higher salary and promotions because they need to collect money for their future spending, especially after they retire from the company. If they were to get a good pension plan after they retire, that could be an incentive for them to work for the same company for a long time. Thus, good incentives, including salary, promotions,

welfare, and a pension plan can affect length of time employees want to work for the company.

The second implication is that job satisfaction, *Kwam Pen Gun Eng*, and good relationship with bosses can be another factor affecting employees' willingness to work for the company. *Kwam Pen Gun Eng* is an outcome of good personal relationship nurtured between two parties. Similar to Japanese idea of front-stage and backstage actions (*soto* and *uchi* (Rosenberger 2001)), Thai people have front-stage and backstage actions. The front-stage occurs when the Thais interact with a stranger. *Kwam Pen Gun Eng* will take place during the backstage actions or when the Thais feel comfortable and acquaintance with other people. If the Thais feel that they have *Kwam Pen Gun Eng* with other people, they will become less formal and feel comfortable to share some personal opinions. In the case of Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, it seems that *Kwam Pen Gun Eng* has not yet been established between them. The Thais still keep a certain distance from their Japanese superiors while the superiors may not realize the importance of making such a personal bond since the Japanese may think that work relationships and job accomplishment should come prior to personal relationships. Such different expectations can cause misunderstandings between the two groups.

CHAPTER 7: VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP

Vertical relationship refers to a relationship and an interaction or the way of relating between superiors and subordinates in the workplace. Good relationship between the two parties can contribute to pleasant atmosphere and job satisfaction at work. On the other hand, if the two parties have conflicts and misunderstanding, it is likely that their job will not go smoothly and that it will be difficult to get the job done. In different cultures, the characteristic of the superior-subordinate relationship and the way to establish it may differ.

Vertical relationship is the second area in which Japanese managers and Thai subordinates encounter different cultural values. From the interviews, we can see that they hold myths about each other. They sometimes misunderstand each other's intention and behaviors. These misunderstandings may come from cultural differences between the two countries. To understand both countries' cultural values in this area of vertical relationship, it is important to learn about its characteristics and other attributes of such a relationship.

Roles of Superiors and Subordinates

A Superior-subordinate relationship in Japan and Thailand seems to be alike in some ways. In Japan and Thailand such a relationship is similar to that between fathers and sons, and that between teachers and students. In Japan, such a relationship is known as *oyabun-kobun* (superior-subordinate) relationship (Nakane 1988). Superiors need to protect and cover subordinates when they have a problem. In return, subordinates should be grateful and loyal to their superiors. Additionally, superiors are like teachers; subordinates are like students. The superiors need to teach and mentor their subordinates about the job; meanwhile, the subordinates need to be obedient and learn about the job.

Although Japanese and Thai people have a similar idea about the superior-subordinate relationship, there are some different expectations. In Thailand, people emphasize good personal relationships between superiors and subordinates. A strong bond between the two parties needs to be established and well maintained. The superiors have both formal and informal roles towards their subordinates. The formal role refers to the superiors' rank and responsibility as bosses in the workplace; the informal role includes direction, protection, and emotional support. The superiors should look after the needs of subordinates. "Indeed, loyalty has by custom been expressed more towards an individual than towards an organization or one's profession" (Holmes, and Tangtongtavy 1997: 35).

From my own experience working with Thai managers, superiors and subordinates tend to establish personal relationships in the workplace. The superiors spend some time talking with subordinates while they are working together. Another case is that if superiors feel that subordinates encounter some problems, the superiors may call the subordinates to talk and ask about their well being in a meeting room. After the relationship is well maintained in the workplace, Thai superiors and subordinates usually go out for lunch together. During lunch, they share hilarious stories to break the ice and to try to know each other better. If both parties – Thai superiors and subordinates – feel that they start to have good relationship, they are likely to go out for dinner on Fridays so that they have more time to know each other better. Usually, the Thais go out with their superiors or work colleagues on Fridays because they can hang out together right after working hours. For other weekdays or weekends, they do not hang out because of the time constraints, traffic congestion, and possible interference with private time for family.

In Japan, relationships between superiors and subordinates are also well established and nurtured. The superiors take good care of their subordinates by giving them advice, teaching them, supporting them either at work or for personal matters, and console them. The subordinates, in return, depend on their superiors, respect them, and follow their directions (Rohlen 1974). However, the Japanese way to

establish superior-subordinate relationships differs from that of the Thais. The Japanese superiors and subordinates may not socialize during working hours. The drinking ritual after working hours is the key to a formation of the superior-subordinate relationships. In the atmosphere of drinking, people become relaxed and less formal. They can talk and discuss several issues, including personal problems. Usually, Japanese people go out for drinks after work. Drinking ritual is an outlet for Japanese people to establish and maintain personal relationships between superiors and subordinates (Rohlen 1974).

Thus, although Japanese and Thai people have similar ideas about superior-subordinate relationships in terms of their roles towards each other, they share some differences, namely the way to establish such relationships. When it comes to the situation of the joint venture companies in which Japanese and Thai people work together, misunderstandings and conflict may arise, and the establishment of the relationships may not go smoothly because of their different methods to establish such relationships. The Japanese superiors prefer working hard during working hours in the office; they have a good time drinking after working hours when they become more relaxed and get to know their subordinates and colleagues.

On the other hand, Thai people are likely to create such relationships in the workplace. The Thais usually talk and consult with each other during the working hours as a way to establish relationship at work. Although they may go out with their superiors and colleagues after working hours, they prefer going back home or hanging out with their family and friends. From my own experience, after work, I preferred going back home to spend time with my family or friends because I felt that I had already spent time with my work colleagues and superiors. After that, I wanted to take time relaxing with my family and friends. However, it is also common for Thai people to go out after work to have dinner or some drinks on Fridays.

Priority at Work: Getting Jobs Done or Building Relationships

From the interviews, although both countries value relationships, when it comes to a real life situation in which both Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates come into contact, they share some misunderstandings and misinterpretations of each other. To the Thai subordinates, Japanese superiors are hard working. Getting a job done is their first priority whereas Thai subordinates want to spend time nurturing good relationships with their Japanese superiors. On the other hand, the Japanese superiors think that their Thai subordinates are too laid-back at work. Some of the Japanese superiors even feel that there is age difference between them. Japanese expatriates think that their subordinates are too young and may not have the same interests as the superiors do. As a result, they are hesitant to go out and talk with their subordinates. When Japanese expatriates are away from home, it is common that they become homesick and want to hang out with their Japanese counterparts because they can converse in their native language and share similar feelings.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technology and Quality Control Department, elucidated his viewpoints about relationships with his Thai subordinates. I worked in the same company with Mr. Mizumoto; I had a chance to work with him because I had to consult with him about quality assurance before informing customers. He is a hard-working and friendly person. He was very willing to give me his interviews although he was very busy. I know several engineers who worked with him; none of them complained about him. However, when I asked him about his expectations from the relationships with his Thai subordinates, he explained that he gave first priority to job accomplishment rather than establishment of relationships with subordinates. He replied,

No. I do not consider long-term relationships with my subordinates. Considering the high fluidity of the labor market, I put more priority on how I can transfer technology and know-how firmly in my company than on

how I can establish strong relationship with my subordinate. (Mr. Mizumoto)

Mr. Yamamoto, a manager of Marketing and Customer Service Department, is another friendly and kind manager. Most of his subordinates were satisfied working with him. He still goes out occasionally with one of his subordinates who already resigned from the company to further her studies in Great Britain. I had a chance to work with him as well because we were in the same office. He often invited his subordinates to have dinner with him. After I interviewed him, he also invited me to have dinner with him and his subordinates. He said that he sometimes felt lonely staying in Thailand because his wife and daughters stayed in Japan. During the interview, I asked Mr. Yamamoto about his relationships with his subordinates in Japan. He explained,

In Japan, after working, superiors and subordinate should exchange their opinion, discuss about the process, and how they think about a certain issue. During office time, they should talk about the job. In the past in Japan people go out once a week for drinking and exchanging opinions. (Mr. Yamamoto)

From the viewpoints of the Japanese superiors, they seem to be less enthusiastic in investing in long-term relationships with Thai subordinates because the Japanese may not see a future for the relationships. Moreover, language problems, and nationality difference are some other factors which make the Japanese become less interested in establishing long-term relationships with their Thai subordinates.

Although the Japanese superiors still consider their drinking rituals necessary because it is a good opportunity to spend time with their subordinates and work colleagues in order to maintain strong personal relationships with their subordinates, Thai subordinates still have myths about their superiors. Thai subordinates who give first priority on establishing relationships with superiors and work colleagues rather than on getting a job done think that they do not have many chances to nurture

personal relationships with their superiors and that their superiors seem not to give much importance to establishing personal relationships with them in return. The following are some points of view from Thai managers and subordinates who work under the Japanese managers' supervision about their relationships with Japanese superiors.

The first one is Suwat, a sales representative working in the same office as Mr. Yamamoto. Suwat joined the company after my resignation. Although his direct supervisor, according to the official organizational chart, is a Thai manager, he sometimes worked with Japanese managers. During the interview about his relationships with his Japanese superiors, he explained,

I do not have close personal relationships with my Japanese boss, just work. I have never gone out for lunch with him. I do not even feel close to my Japanese boss since we have never talked about personal issues other than work. However, with my Thai boss, I sometimes ask for his advice such as about good schools to further my studies.
(Suwat)

The second one is Preeda, a technical service engineer who works under Mr. Yamamoto's supervision. He compared Japanese and Thai values in terms of relationships from his experience working with both Japanese and Thai managers. Before transferring to the current position in this joint venture company, Preeda worked for a Thai conglomerate company which was a joint shareholder of his current company. Comparing his experience about Japanese and Thai values in establishing relationships, Preeda explained,

Japanese superiors think that relationships come after job accomplishment. If subordinates are assigned to do a job, they must get it done no matter what. On the other hand, for Thai people, relationships come from personal interactions and getting to know each other, not directly from the job. The superiors will come, ask how the

progress on the job is going and, offer help along the process. The Thai superiors are supportive. (Preeda)

The third comment is from, Punrawee, a Thai manager of Sales and Marketing Department, who is Suwat's direct supervisor. I worked under Punrawee's supervision for a while and then I resigned from the company. He was transferred to this position after, Sith, my first supervisor requested the company to transfer him back to his previous company because Sith was not satisfied with working with the Japanese superiors. Unlike Sith, my previous Thai manager, Punrawee could get along better and work with Japanese managers. This is probably because, when considering his background, he studied and did some internship in Japan before. He could speak and understand Japanese language. However, he claimed that he was not fluent because it has been a long time since he stayed in Japan. From his interviews, he might have assimilated into Japanese work ethics to some extent since he agreed with the Japanese that relationships came after job success while most of Thai subordinates thought that such an idea did not go along with Thai values. Punrawee elucidated,

Relationship with my subordinates should come after work; if my subordinates can work and satisfies my objectives, personal relationship will follow. After working hours, I try to do some activities with my subordinates. Long-term relationship is possible. I think personal relationship is a reward or motivation for my subordinates' job accomplishment. (Punrawee)

As far as Punrawee's point of view about relationships at work was concerned, some of his Thai subordinates gave unpleasant feedbacks about him. For example, they thought that he could not be trusted because he often informed Japanese superiors of his subordinates' secrets. Whenever he overheard Thai subordinates complaining about anything in the office, he often reported the complaints to other Japanese managers.

From the above interviews, Japanese and Thai superiors believe that good relationships should follow job accomplishment. If subordinates can meet superiors' job expectations and finish their assignments as planned, it is likely that their superiors will be satisfied with the subordinate's performance, leading to better relationships. From the superiors' viewpoints, strong relationships are based on the process of job accomplishment.

Thai Subordinates' Complaints about Relationships with Japanese Superiors

From the interviews, one of the areas that Thai subordinates frequently talked about was their relationships with Japanese superiors. They complained about their superiors' negligence in maintaining personal relationships with them, which is one of the key factors causing some cross-cultural misunderstandings between the two parties at work. There are several different situations in which Thai subordinates complained about their Japanese superiors. The following are some of the comments from Thai subordinates.

The first comment is from Preeda, a technical service engineer. He complained that his Japanese superior did not help cover Thai subordinates' mistakes or solve problems. He said,

A lot of jobs are assigned. If there is a problem, a responsible person needs to solve the problem by himself. The boss does not really help solve it. A person needs to be tough to work for the Japanese. (Preeda)

Lack of personal relationship between superiors and subordinates is the second complaint Thai managers and subordinates placed against the Japanese managers. Korkiat, an assistant manager of a joint venture manufacturing company, worked directly under a Japanese manager's supervision. He worked at the same company as Preeda did. Korkiat has been working for this company for almost seven years. He

claimed that the Japanese expatriates were aggressive and that lack of personal relationships resulted in a less friendly atmosphere to do the job. He explained,

The Japanese often set a goal first and make steps to reach the goal. They have very strict steps. Such procedures make a job less friendly to do. They make the job look more serious. Japanese culture is aggressive. They must reach the target they set. They are not concerned about relationship between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. Their practice works well between Japanese managers and their Japanese subordinates. However, it is not for their Thai subordinates. They should not act too serious to Thai subordinates because Thai culture stresses personal relationship. They should act more gently to subordinates and understand them individually. (Korkiat)

Korkiat's answer is a good example of the beliefs Thai subordinates hold about their Japanese superiors. In Japanese culture, good relationships are valued. It is essential to establish and nurture relationships with one another before doing business together. Similarly, in Thailand, such a value of relationships is important. Nevertheless, there are some differences in degrees of how much each country values relationships. In addition, in Japanese culture, there are usually certain ways or steps to do things. For example, there are certain ways to serve and drink tea. Likewise, there are certain steps to complete an assignment. For the Thais, such processes make a job less friendly to complete.

To further understand the superior-subordinate relationships and how satisfied Thai subordinates are with their relationships, I questioned Thai subordinates if they want to change their relationships with their Japanese superiors. Noradee, a sales representative having worked at the same company as Korkiat for four years, wanted to strengthen her relationship with her Japanese superiors because she felt the lack of personal bonding between them. She believed that good personal bonding would result in more effective output of work. She answered,

Yes, I want to change the relationship with my Japanese bosses because they usually deal and talk with me mostly about the job. I feel that we do not have tight personal bonding. It is important to have more personal relationship with my Japanese bosses or feel more acquaintances since such a personal relationship may contribute to the success of the work. I think that it is essential for the bosses and the subordinates to establish personal relationship or have more talks so that we will know how to work and deal with each other appropriately. (Noradee)

We can learn that there are different priorities on establishing relationships and on getting a job done between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. While the Thais prefer building strong personal bonding prior to get a job completed, Japanese managers believe that job procedure and job accomplishment can generate pleasant personal relationships.

Apart from the complaints about the lack of personal relationships with Japanese superiors, Thai subordinates stated their reluctance and fear to approach their Japanese superiors because they thought that the Japanese were hot-tempered and aggressive. From my personal experience working with Japanese expatriates, I think the Japanese looked aggressive because of their facial expressions and actions. The Japanese superiors sometimes scolded and threw papers at their subordinates. However, in Thai culture, it is not common for superiors to scold their subordinates, particularly in front of other colleagues. If Thai managers are not satisfied with some subordinates, they will talk with their subordinates in private. They hardly blame their subordinates in front of other work colleagues since such an action will embarrass the subordinates and cause loss of face. Thus, it is likely that Thai subordinates who do not want to encounter any conflict with their Japanese superiors will feel uncomfortable dealing with their Japanese managers, especially when a problem arises. The following are some examples in which Thai subordinates explained that they were reluctant and afraid to approach their Japanese superiors because of their hot-tempered characteristic. Chaisupat, a senior assistant manager of a trading company, said,

Communication is important. Usually, Thai subordinates are afraid to approach Japanese superiors when they have a problem, especially those hot-tempered Japanese managers. (Chaisupat)

Suwat, a sales representative of a joint venture manufacturing company, said,

They (Japanese managers) are too aggressive and do not understand subordinates. My Japanese boss always asks for reasons when I cannot get the job done. For example, Japanese customers prefer talking directly to Japanese managers. So, I cannot get some information requested by my Japanese boss, but he does not understand why I didn't get the information. I have never told him the real reasons. (Suwat)

Supranee, a senior delivery control Staff of a trading company, said,

Japanese is hot-tempered. He wants to get the job done without thinking whether subordinates are available to get those things done. A Japanese manager delegates an assignment to his subordinates even though it was his responsibility to finish that job and he was supposed to help his staff do it. (Supranee)

To the Thai subordinates, superiors should be friendly so that the subordinates are not afraid and feel comfortable to approach them. Nonetheless, from the interviews, we can see that apart from lacking personal bonding with their Japanese bosses, Thai subordinates are frightened by the Japanese superiors' characteristics of being hot-tempered and aggressive. Thus, the subordinates feel uncomfortable dealing with their superiors, which can cause some misunderstandings and discouragement in their relationships and devotion at work.

Another characteristic is that some of the Thai subordinates doubt whether their Japanese superiors are sincere to them, especially when the superiors give them some compliments. This is another example which can cause some negative myths

about Japanese superiors since their Thai subordinates are not certain how to interpret some of the non-verbal language of their Japanese managers. Supansa, a sales assistant, and Noradee, a sales representative, working at the same joint venture manufacturing company, mentioned that they were not sure whether their Japanese managers were sincere to them when the superiors gave them some compliments. The two subordinates thought that there might be some hidden agendas.

Supansa said, "It is difficult to understand some of the non-verbal language of the Japanese managers. I doubt what they really mean when they say something and what their real intentions are."

Noradee also commented on Japanese superiors' compliments. She said,

It depends on each individual's characters. If a boss trusts and supports me, I feel happy. Still, I feel that there is a gap in terms of culture and business protocols when working with the Japanese bosses. Sometimes I am not sure which Japanese superiors are sincere, especially when a boss compliments me too much. The Japanese bosses are too strict when they work. So, I feel stressed. The relationship with my Japanese bosses is likely to be business related or based on business since most of them come here based on a contract. (Noradee)

Usually, compliments are given to subordinates because superiors want their subordinates to work harder or to show their appreciation towards their subordinates. However, Thai subordinates seem to feel uncomfortable with the Japanese superiors' compliments and some of their non-verbal expressions. The Thai subordinates think that too many compliments and the way the Japanese praise them sound insincere. The Japanese managers usually give compliments to Thai subordinates using a loud voice, which embarrasses Thai subordinates and makes them stick out from the group. Becoming too prominent in the group is not appropriate in Thai culture because it is important for the Thais to be humble to keep solidarity in the group. Furthermore, I think the Japanese superiors use a loud voice to give compliments to a successful subordinate because they want to encourage others to do the same things.

Nevertheless, the Thai subordinates do not interpret such compliments and the ways to say them accordingly, resulting in misunderstandings between the Japanese and the Thais at work.

Thai Concepts of Relationships and Expectations

In this section, a Thai way of relating between superiors and subordinates and ideal characteristics of superiors whom Thai subordinates want to work with are explored so that we can better understand some misinterpretations and misunderstandings between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates when they work together. An interesting way of relating in Thai culture which Thai subordinates provided during the interviews was working like brother and sister or working like *Pee Kub Nong* in Thai. Literally, *Pee* refers to an older brother or sister; *Nong* refers to a younger brother or sister. Some ideal characteristics of superiors whom Thai subordinates want to work with are discussed below.

Korkiat, an assistant manager, compared and contrasted characteristics of the Japanese managers with those of the Thais and stated the idea of working like brother and sister.

A Thai boss usually focuses on using personal relationship in working with their subordinates and instructing them. Their working relationship is like brother and sister (*Pee Kub Nong*). So, the job procedure flows smoothly. On the other hand, if there is more personal relationship, subordinates will become less *Kreng Jai*, less respectful and less effective such as postponing deadlines. (Korkiat)

Soraya, a coordinator of a trading company, worked for both Japanese and Thai managers. She also described her relationships with her Thai superiors which could illustrate characteristics which the Thai subordinates expected from their superiors in general.

With my Thai boss, he is more like a work colleague. My Thai boss is supportive. He talks to the Japanese boss when there is a problem. He also encourages teamwork. If I have a problem, I will consult with my Thai boss and then he will talk with the Japanese boss for me. (Soraya)

Preeda, a technical service engineer, raised an example of his Thai manager at his previous company because he was pleased with his previous boss' consideration and concerns about subordinates during work and after work. His previous Thai manager often asked about subordinates' well being and stayed late in the office if he saw that his subordinates were still working. If the boss had to leave the office before his subordinates, he would show his concerns by allowing them to call him when problem arose. Preeda wanted his current Japanese superiors to show such concerns to him and other subordinates.

Two interesting Thai concepts, *Num Jai* and *Sue Jai*, were raised in his explanation. *Num Jai* literally means water from heart, referring to superiors showing consideration with sincerity in their willingness to offer help to subordinates. The second one *Sue Jai*, literally means to buy a heart. If superiors are able to *Sue Jai* of their subordinates, it means that the superiors can make their subordinates feel grateful to them and, thus, subordinates are willing to do anything for their superiors.

It is important for superiors to establish both job and personal relationships with subordinates. The superiors should learn how to *Sue Jai* from their subordinates. The superiors should be supportive to them not only during working hours but also after working hours so that subordinates will be willing to work for them. For example, when I had a car accident, my Thai boss at my previous company drove to the scene to check if I was alright because my boss' house was close by. Another example is that my ex-boss stayed late at night in his office working on his job when his subordinates were still working in the office. When he was about to leave for home, he told his subordinates that he's going back home and they can call him at his mobile phone if problems arise. (Preeda)

From the above interviews, Thai subordinates want to work with superiors who are very supportive, considerate, and willing to help cover them when problems arise. It can be difficult for the Japanese to learn such ideal characteristics of the superiors because the Japanese may have different ways to establish relationships with their subordinates. Thus, it is important for both Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates to learn about each other to better establish strong personal bonding and to work effectively together.

Suggestions: After-Hour Activities

The above are some situations in which the superiors and the subordinates encountered different cultural values and expectations. To rectify the situations, the subordinates suggested several activities. After-hour activities, such as dinner, drinking ritual, and trip to other provinces, are alternatives since the superiors and subordinates will be able to spend time together outside the workplace and become relaxed. Such activities can help strengthen good relationships, teamwork, unity, and understandings between superiors and subordinates as well as among work colleagues.

In Japan, superiors and subordinates usually go out for drinks after working. During the drinking ritual, it is acceptable for them to get drunk and exchange their personal matters and difficulties at work. In some situations, the subordinates may try to lobby their superiors to get an approval for a project. Mr. Kato, a coordination manager of a joint venture manufacturing company and Mr. Ota, a managing director of another joint venture heavy industry manufacturer, elucidated some functions of after-hour activities, particularly the drinking ritual.

Mr. Kato said, "For the after-hour activities, people speak out to relieve stress and say unsolved problem when getting drunk. By speaking out, it could become worse or better. It is 50-50. If it does not work, some actions need to be taken."

Mr. Ota introduced the function of the drinking ritual as *nemawashi*.

Nemawashi refers to quality discussion to prevent loss of face before the real discussion. After-hour talking in a drinking shop is important because it is easier. In Japan it is very important to concentrate on business; it is very difficult to have informal talking like the interview I am doing with you. So, after the work, we have informal time and discuss during drinking. When people get drunk, they forget something. After-hour working equals to a business meeting. During drinking, a person tries to propose a project. This is a custom. It is difficult to do this in Thailand because it is not a Thai custom. When Thai people join such a discussion, they hesitate to join the conversation. Only Japanese bring this culture and do it among Japanese because they know the essence of this drinking ritual after work. (Mr. Ota)

According to Mayumi Otsubo (1993: 237), *nemawashi* is “a groundwork for an important *kaigi*,” a formal conference or meeting, in which one briefly explains the project and requests some ideas from his/ her colleagues before the real discussion in the formal conference. An unofficial agreement needs to be reached during the *nemawashi* process to save the face of the person before he/ she presents his/ her project in the *kaigi*. Otsubo also explained the origin of this word as follows.

The origin of the term *nemawashi* is the process of planting a tree. When a big tree is to be moved from one place to another, the gardener first digs around its roots and turns them around a bundle. *Ne* means “root” and *mawashi* means “turning around.” (Otsubo 1993: 237)

Similar to the Japanese, Thai people enjoy after-hour activities with their work colleagues and superiors although such activities may not be exactly the same. After working, the Thais may have dinner with their superiors who are expected to pay for the meal. During holidays, the company may set a trip to other provinces where superiors and subordinates can spend time together to strengthen their teamwork. Nevertheless, the topics of the discussion during Thai after-hour activities are less likely about work. Instead, the Thais enjoy hilarious stories or everyday issues

because they are concerned that serious topics or work-related issues may cause confrontations and conflicts during such relaxing moments after working hours.

In Japan, people also enjoy holiday trips with their work colleagues. Thomas P. Rohlen (1974) explained several after-hour activities of employees working for a Japanese bank. However, it is a different case when Japanese expatriates work in Thailand. The Japanese expatriates are likely to socialize with one another instead of mingling with their non-Japanese counterparts. There are different factors which cause changes in socializing patterns of the Japanese. Some examples are differences in personal interests, age differences, and language problems. Economic problems are another contributing factor because there are fewer chances for the company to provide budget for their employees to set a holiday trip. The following section examines whether after-hour activities work well to reinforce pleasant relationships between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates. They also illustrated some reasons if the activities did not work for them.

Some Japanese managers view after-hour activities as important since such activities help create good relationship with their subordinates and work colleagues. Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of Administration Department, explained that after-hour activities were important. However, such activities did not work well when he was in Thailand since most of his subordinates were women. It was not appropriate to invite them out and drink with them often. He also mentioned that Japanese and Thai employees could not join some activities due to the expensive cost.

In Japan it is important. But, all of my staff now in Thailand are women, so it is a constraint. It is not appropriate to invite them out. We can talk through daytime business. The company also has a Golf competition for employees. Only Japanese employees participate in this event. I wish Thai staff could join. However, the cost is so expensive. It is about 1,500 baht.
(Mr. Kobayashi)

Mr. Kato, a coordination manager of a joint venture manufacturing company, also stressed importance of after-hour activities, particular a drinking ritual. Yet, he pointed out that such an activity was not practical in Thailand because Thai people usually drove and it was dangerous for them when they got drunk. He also added that Thai people did not drink or smoke as much as the Japanese did. I worked with Mr. Kato before. He was a friendly and nice manager. Most of the subordinates shared a lot of pleasant working experiences with him. Mr. Kato enjoyed drinking and smoking. However, none of the Thai subordinates in the office smoked. Although many subordinates liked him, we did not go out with him because he usually had to work in the office late. Another reason is that we did not know what to discuss if we went out with him.

Drinking ritual is important. In Japan, people commute by train: it is easier to go out to drink because we do not have to drive. In Japan, people drink and smoke a lot. In Thailand, most people drive. Also, my Thai staff do not drink or smoke a lot. An appointment also needs to be made in advance to go out for a drink with subordinates.
(Mr. Kato)

Still, some Japanese managers do not think that after-hour activities are necessary because they believe that job accomplishment should come first. They think that they can also get along with their subordinates during working hours.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technology and Quality Control Department, said, "I do not have any time with my subordinates after work because I think everybody should spend his private time for his enjoyment as he needs. I do not think it is important because I try to go along with them frankly even in work hours."

Mr. Hashiyama, a general manager of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, stated that he wanted to go out with his subordinates. However, he was hesitant to invite them because he was not certain if his subordinates wanted to go out with him. He also felt that he and his subordinate had age differences and that they might not share the same interests in conversation. He enjoyed talking about the company and

its future. In addition, owing to the high turnover rate of Thai employees, he thought that Thai employees did not share commitment to the company as he had.

I do not have a lot of activities with my subordinates because I have to entertain a lot of Japanese customers. I wonder if my subordinates want to go out with me. I am afraid that my staff may not want to go because of our age differences. It is common in Japan to go out after work with colleagues. In Japan I went out after work every day. In Japan people recognize and value lifetime employment. Thai people leave the company easily. They do not have the same spirit. So, I do not want to invite them out and talk because I am not sure when they are going to resign from the company. When I was in Japan, it was enjoyable to go out after work with my colleagues to talk about the company because people have the same idea about lifetime employment. However, it does not make sense to go out and talk like when I was in Japan. Also, there is age difference between me and my subordinates in Thailand.
(Mr. Hashiyama)

Commitment to the company is an important issue between the Japanese and the Thais; it also affects how much both parties want to invest in establishing good relationships with each other. The Thais put more emphasis on respect to individuals while Japanese people focus on the group and the company. It is common for the Thais to change a job to obtain higher promotions. However, for the Japanese, lifetime employment is a common practice. Japanese employees do not change a job often; they usually work at the same company until their retirement.

Budget, language problems, and personal preferences are some factors for Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates to enjoy after-hour activities together. Mr. Nishii, a vice president of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, worked in the Bangkok office for almost two years. During the interviews, Mr. Nishii often showed his interest in learning about Thai culture and exchanging his idea. He often asked me about Thai lifestyle such as movies and hobbies that Thai people enjoyed. He explained that at that time the company did not have many budgets to entertain its own

employees due to economic recession. He said that he wanted to hang out with his subordinates. However, most of them preferred hanging out with their Thai colleagues. He was sometimes reluctant to go out with his subordinates because of the language problems. Mr. Nishii explained,

For lunch, we do not have lunch together. Usually, Thai staff goes out with Thai staff; Japanese goes out with Japanese. After-hour drinking does not always work in Thailand because of language problems. Thai people hardly drink; they usually go home after work. Personally, I am bored living alone in Thailand. However, because of language problems, I prefer hanging out with my Japanese colleagues. On the other hand, when I worked in Malaysia, I hung out with local staff because they could speak English quite fluently. Actually, I want to have an informal meeting with Thai staff if possible. (Mr. Nishii)

Thai managers also shared their points of view about the significance of after-hour activities. Woraya, a deputy general manager, has worked for a Japanese trading company for over 20 years. She worked under Mr. Hashiyama's supervision. She thought that after-hour activities were essential to strengthening strong bonding between superiors and subordinates. Thus, she often set a holiday trip for her subordinates. She commented that not all the Japanese managers saw the importance of after-hour activities. She said,

Taking subordinates out or not depends on each Japanese person's characteristics and preferences. It depends on each department having after-work activities. I usually arrange some activities with my subordinates such as eating out and traveling abroad because I have some budget to do so. (Woraya)

Korkiat, an assistant manager of a joint venture manufacturer, commented that there should be more activities for Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates to nurture their personal relationships. He also believed that job satisfaction came after good

relationships between superiors and subordinates during and after work. Some after-hour activities could help create a pleasant atmosphere and understandings between the two parties. Korkiat said,

The relationship with bosses should be improved. Personal activities between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates should be increased. The Japanese do not set up any personal activities between Japanese superiors and Thai staff. Japanese managers should study about Thai culture before working together to decrease misunderstandings at work. For the Japanese, they focus on hard working; they devote themselves to the job. On the other hand, satisfaction of Thai staff depends on job satisfaction, and work environment, including warm personal relationships. If Thai staff are pressured a lot, they are likely to be able to work less effectively and they do not want to work or find the job less satisfactory. (Korkiat)

Many Thai subordinates also thought that after-hour activities were essential to strengthening relationships with their managers. From the above interviews, Thai managers set some activities with their Thai subordinates so that they could spend time getting to know each other and establishing strong bonding within a group. If the Thais feel comfortable during such informal activities, it is likely that they will be able to cooperate and work more effectively. The following are some comments from Thai subordinates about after-hour activities.

Supranee, a senior delivery control staff, always showed her happiness and enjoyable moments working for her company because she felt that her Japanese boss was understanding and supportive towards Thai subordinates. In her company, they usually had informal after-hour activities together which helped strengthen relationships among people in the same company. Supranee said,

At my company, we do not have such informal gatherings often. We go out once or twice a month. We usually go to karaoke. We also have welcoming parties, go bowling, and

go traveling to other provinces. Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates talk and discuss almost everything such as language, overseas trip, family, gossip about customers, and concerns about employees in the company. (Supranee)

Peeraporn, a sales assistant at a joint venture manufacturer, also stressed the importance of the after-hour activities in maintaining good relationships and understandings between superiors and subordinates. She said,

Informal gatherings are important because it is an event in which superiors and subordinate get to know each other so that we can work together effectively. In the past, there were welcoming and farewell parties for newcomers and those who were about to resign from the company. There is no connection or relationship between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates because currently we do not hold any farewell party for those who are about to resign. We lack the sense of close bonding. (Peeraporn)

Some Thai subordinates did not think that after-hour activities were important or useful. Noradee did not feel comfortable during the informal gatherings with her Japanese managers because she was reluctant to share her opinion. She felt that she had to be formal and think twice before exchanging her opinion with her managers. She said,

We hardly have one. I guess we have it just only once a year. Personally, I feel uncomfortable and afraid to express my opinion because I do not know my boss. I am afraid that there might be some consequences for whatever I say. I need to take responsibility for what I say. My Japanese boss may misinterpret my opinion which may result in my boss' evaluation of my performance. So, I need to think a lot before expressing my opinion. I think that the Japanese is not open-minded. They talk more to non-Japanese counterparts who do not understand their language. (Noradee)

Chalermchai, a sales representative at a joint venture manufacturer, joined the company a few years after my resignation. He did think that superiors and subordinates could establish and nurture their relationships not only after working hours but also during working hours. He explained,

There are few gatherings between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. If superiors and subordinates can work and cooperate well together, gatherings or after-hour activities may not be essential since we can learn about each other by other means. Thai manager take subordinates out sometimes but not often. Informal gatherings may be helpful to build and strengthen good relationship between superiors and subordinates. However, just eating together may not help us establish good relationship. I have suggested some other activities to strengthen relationship such as car rally and sport. (Chalermchai)

For the cases of Chalermchai, Peeraporn, and Noradee, I once worked in the same company as they did. During my tenure at the company, we had welcoming and farewell parties for newcomers and resigners respectively. However, I later learned that many employees had resigned from the company and that Japanese managers did not hold any parties for either newcomers or resigners as we had done before. Thus, Chalermchai, Peeraporn, and Noradee think that such elimination of parties could create a gap between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates since such less formal parties could create a pleasant atmosphere to strengthening strong bonding between superiors and subordinates.

Although the Japanese, similar to Thai people, emphasize after-hour activities and parties as means to supporting good relationships between superiors and subordinates, we cannot assume that what happens in Japan will happen in Thailand because of differences in cultural values and contexts. I believe that Japanese managers did not have parties for newcomers and resigners because a lot of employees already resigned from the company. After the high turn over rate of my former workplace, the Japanese managers tend to treat Thai employees differently because of

fear of language problems in interactions and less trust in everyday group work.

Japanese managers might feel Thai employees' lack of commitment, trust, and care for the company.

According to Patricia Gercik (1996), mutual understandings and trusts are vital in establishing pleasant relationships in Japan. Gercik says that it usually takes time and a lot of effort for non-Japanese people to gain trust and make good relationships with the Japanese. "Acceptance is hard-earned for non-Japanese" (Gercik 1996: 37). Such cases in my former company support Gercik's work (1996). Referring to my research study, Japanese feelings towards the Thais' commitment to the company and their less trust in Thai employees are common. As a result, Japanese superiors in my former company may doubt Thai employees' trust and commitment for the company. The Japanese tend to withdraw some of their trust for Thai employees and treat them differently. It is vital for Thai employees to re-establish trust and mutual understandings with the Japanese so that they will be able to work together successfully and effectively.

Although there seems to be several problems and misunderstandings between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, many Thai managers and subordinates have good experience working with their Japanese superiors.

Panudej, a sales and marketing manager at a Japanese trading firm, gave an example of his Japanese boss being supportive and treating his subordinates when they accomplished an assignment. Panudej said,

My Japanese bosses encourage subordinates to work. If subordinates can get new customers, some bosses will take them to have a meal. For example, my boss took a sales representative to Mc Donald's when he could open a new account. The topics we talked during the meeting are, for instance, personal issue, movies. It depends on each Japanese person. The Japanese expatriates have a department budget for their staff. (Panudej)

The following are more examples of the pleasant moments Thai subordinates shared with me about their working experience with their Japanese superiors. They explained that their Japanese superiors often gave them compliments when they finish the job. They also encouraged teamwork and love of the organization among employees.

Suwat, a sales representative, said, "The Japanese boss gives a compliment and has a party sometimes. The Japanese tend to encourage people to love their organization."

Piti, a senior sales staff, said, "Compared to my Thai bosses who hardly gave compliments to subordinates, my Japanese superiors often praised us when we do a good job."

Komsun, a sales coordinator working under Mr. Kato's supervision, said, "My Japanese boss is polite, nice, and kind. He teaches me to do the job. He is not bossy and does not let emotion be involved in the job. I am satisfied with the relationship with my Japanese boss."

Supranee, a senior delivery control staff at a shipping company, cited some enjoyable moments with her Japanese superiors. She explained,

With my Japanese superior, I can sometimes play and talk with him and consult with him. We have pretty close and good relationship. I am satisfied with the existing relationship with my Japanese boss. I do not want to be too close to him. I think it is good because I have a chance to practice my English. He is open-minded. He sometimes takes me out to dinner. My boss is friendly, informal, and casual with me. We can play and say things like 'You are fat,' or 'You are old and forgetful.' (Supranee)

Some Japanese superiors also show their understandings in Thai culture; they spend time talking with their subordinates and exchanging opinions. Mr. Kato is a good example of the Japanese managers whom their staff think is nice to work with. Apart from the company's annual parties such as Christmas or New Year's, Mr. Kato

often found some time to go out for dinner with his subordinates. He wanted to learn his subordinates' working styles and preferences so that they would be able to adjust to one another and work effectively together. He often exchanged opinions with his subordinates. He explained,

We are very busy. So, we try to minimize the conversation. We use informal discussion to talk and share opinion if our subordinates are happy or not. This is good to reflect happy or unhappy things about job. I can now get a sense if my staff are happy or not. I have learned to figure it out and understood it now. So, I asked my staff to speak out. To supervise my staff, I would learn their characteristics to know how to work with them efficiently and know how to motivate them. I just want my staff to feel positive when they work with me. So, it is going to be easier for me to ask them to do the job. What's more, personal relationship or individual-to-individual relationship at work is very important from the beginning. I need to know my staff's style of working. (Mr. Kato)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the above are comments from Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates as well as cases regarding superior-subordinate relationships in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. In both nations, superior-subordinate relationships are like those between fathers and sons, and like those between teachers and students. Superiors are supposed to take very good care of subordinates; subordinates, in return, should be grateful and pay respect to their superiors. Both Japanese and Thai people also emphasize good relationships and strong bonding. However, the ways of interactions and process of establishing good relationships differ in two cultures. In Japanese culture, it is very difficult for non-Japanese to gain trust and mutual understandings which are key factors to establish good relationships with the Japanese. Thai employees need to take time and a lot of effort to show their loyalty,

sincerity, and commitment and care for the company as means to strengthening good relationships with Japanese superiors.

Meanwhile, Japanese managers need to learn ways to establish relationships with Thai subordinates. Japanese superiors should take some time to learn about their Thai subordinates and talk to them. After-hour activities and open communication are some good methods to establish strong bonding between superiors and subordinates. Nonetheless, from the interviews, some of the Japanese and Thai managers believe that good relationships are generated during the job procedure and/ or after the job accomplishment whereas Thai subordinates tend to think that good relationships should be created prior to job procedure and accomplishment. Therefore, it is important for both Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates to get to know each other better so that they will be able to work together more effectively.

CHAPTER 8: AUTHORITY AND SUPERVISION STYLE

This chapter concerning authority and supervision styles in Japanese-Thai joint ventures differs from the previous chapter on vertical relationship in that the previous chapter discusses the relationships or the ways of relating between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, including the roles of the superiors and the subordinates and how people establish good relationships in each country. In this chapter, Japanese superiors' supervision styles and Thai subordinates' reactions to the Japanese supervision as well as delegation of authority in making decision are explored. The strategies, processes or tools of the Japanese supervision styles are scolding, expecting expression of opinion, information sharing, and decision-making process.

Delegation of authority and supervision styles are the third area in which conflicts and misunderstandings between the Japanese and Thais are possible. Due to cultural differences, it is significant to understand superior-subordinate relationships and the authority distribution and supervision styles in such relationships so that we can help improve better understandings between the two parties and increase their productivity at work. Possible areas in which misunderstandings can occur include roles of superiors and subordinates in regards to supervision techniques, promotion, trust to do the job, authority given to subordinates, information sharing, decision-making processes, and expression of ideas.

To better understand the authority distribution and its effect to such intercultural encounters between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in joint ventures, we need to examine their concepts and expectations of their relationships in terms of authority distribution and supervision style, mainly based on their cultures.

Japanese Supervision Style and Thai Subordinates' Reactions

Referring to roles of the superiors and subordinates mentioned in the previous chapter on vertical relationship, in both cultures, superior-subordinate relationships are like those relationships between fathers and sons as well as those between teachers and students. The superiors are supposed to advise, give instructions, and mentor their subordinates, and that subordinates should respect, obey, and follow their superiors' instructions. Yet, when it comes to intercultural interactions, the actual situations are not as simple as such ideal concepts. There are subtle differences in cultural values, personality, and expectations of cultural members in the intercultural work settings.

The supervision styles include how Japanese superiors delegate work, and how they supervise their subordinates. From the interviews, we can learn the Japanese supervision styles from Thai subordinates' comments as follows.

Soraya, a coordinator of a Japanese trading company affirmed that the rules were not simple as we mentioned above since each person had his/ her own personal characteristics besides his/ her own cultural values, which might also affect behaviors. Soraya explained that the supervision style of her Japanese boss was not only based on Japanese culture, but it also depended on his personality. She said, "It depends on each Japanese boss's characteristic. Some of them are very mean and pushy about the job."

On the other hand, Supansa, a sales assistant of a joint venture manufacturer, gave an example of the different experience in which her boss's personality was more supportive. Thus, he was likely to be friendly and pleasant to work with. Supansa said,

My Japanese boss tells reasons before giving assignments if the jobs are beyond my responsibility. He just knows the right way to deal with the subordinates and get them to work effectively. He knows how to approach and ask for help from them. He knows how to make me feel important

and special by using appropriate words and actions.
(Supansa)

Supervision and Learning Styles

Supervision or training and learning styles of the Japanese and the Thais also differ. Usually, Japanese companies hire new graduates and provide them with on-the-job training until they are able to do the job themselves. On the contrary, Thai companies prefer hiring employees with the degrees in relation to their job position and responsibility. The companies do not provide intensive on-the-job training as the Japanese do. The Thais expect that the employees should know the basis of how to do the job because they are equipped with such knowledge from their degrees.

Many new graduates who join the Japanese joint ventures in Thailand right after they graduate often complain that they are not given any task to do for their very first few months at work. They have to go to the company feeling disoriented. They do not know how to behave since nobody really guides them. Meanwhile, the Japanese expect new employees to watch and learn from the old members about how they do the job. At the same time, the new employees should learn to get along with their work colleagues and prove their commitment to the company (Gercik 1996).

From my observations and interviews with personnel manager and personnel office workers of a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer in Thailand, I learned that at first Japanese managers had a policy to recruit new graduates from certain prestigious public universities, namely Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University because they believed that those new graduates were equipped with quality education and personality. Later, after a lot of new graduates recruited from those universities resigned from the company, Japanese managers asked the personnel manager to recruit new graduates from other private universities which were lesser in status when compared to the aforementioned public universities because they thought that the graduates from the higher-level public universities did not have strong commitment to the company.

Due to the aforementioned differences in work concepts and expectations, the Japanese and the Thais may become disoriented and have unpleasant impression of each other for their first few days at work. Because of lack of cultural knowledge, some Thai employees may not understand such styles and create some generalization of the Japanese being ignorant. From that point, they may start to have misunderstandings and conflicts at work.

From the interviews, the Japanese managers explained training process and supervision styles. Mr. Kato, a manager of a Japanese-Thai joint venture, explained how the Japanese company recruited new employees. He said,

The Japanese company usually recruits new graduates from good reputable universities. We will give them on-the-job training to learn how to do the job. It does not matter about what degrees they have. They can learn from the job. For sales representatives and customer services engineers, we usually send them to the plants to learn the real process of making the steel so that they know the product they sell and that they will be able to sell the product to customers. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager at the same company as Mr. Kato, carefully explained the Japanese expectations from the employees' performance and productivity, so the new recruits needed to go through a certain training process to learn how to work effectively. He said,

It is true that in Japan people have to show that they are serious while they work. In Japan, the progress of the work or the result of the work should be checked severely. The Japanese expect the result – both quality and quantity of work – about 90% while in other countries people may expect the result to be only 70%. The Japanese respect a business process while the Americans respect the business results. Kata means shape and basic procedure. This word is used in traditional Japanese sports like Judo, and Kendo. People need to learn about this before application. In Japan, before becoming a manager, he/ she should learn

about the discipline and many basic business methods or processes for six to seven years so that they can apply and know how to use application. Japanese companies usually educate new employees for a year before they work while Thai companies hire experienced employees. So, the Japanese companies expect employees to work for the company for a long time. The employees are also expected to have long commitment with the company. (Mr. Yamamoto)

As far as supervision is concerned, it is also important to learn whether the Japanese and the Thais are more oriented towards the process or the outcome when they solve a problem. For the Japanese, process is important. They have the certain way to do things and get things done. If they follow a particular way, they will certainly reach a good outcome. On the other hand, the Thais tend to value outcome orientation. It is important to get a result or achieve a certain target while it is less vital to follow or strict with a certain way to get things done.

Thai managers elucidated their supervision styles and commented on their Japanese superiors' style of supervision. Panudej, a Thai manager of a Japanese trading firm, said, that he tended to follow his Japanese superior's style of supervision. His superior usually taught the new staff how to do the job step by step. Panudej said,

I supervise my subordinates step by step and let them do it themselves. At the beginning, the Japanese teach how to do the job in detail. Later, they will let subordinates do the job by themselves. For me, I will consider my subordinates' characteristics and learning styles and supervise them accordingly. I will also consider if they have prior experiences or not. If not, I will coach them strictly. Overall, my supervision style is similar to that of the Japanese. (Panudej)

Punrawee, a sales department manager of a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer, explained how the Japanese superiors trained him to do the job and how he trained his subordinates. He said,

My supervision style differs from that of the Japanese superiors because I have work experiences. The Japanese just gave me assignments and let me do the work. But, for my new subordinates, I will closely train them. (Punrawee)

Korkiat, a manager of the Sales Department at the same company as Punrawee described his experience with his Japanese superior's style of supervision in comparison with Thai supervision style. He explained,

The Japanese focus on step by step work. Staffs need to find information before meeting customers. After meeting customers, they need to prepare sales report. In the report, they need to provide detailed information about customers and issues discussed during the meeting. The Japanese focus on procedure of work. They have concrete procedure so that they can train new employees and replace old employees when they resign from the company. The Japanese boss is like an instructor. The Japanese will teach staffs what they want and tell the procedures step-by-step how to do the job. They will do follow up the progress of the assignments and instruct the deadlines. On the other hand, the Thai supervisors have the same objective as the Japanese which is to reach a certain target. The Thai managers will tell the staffs about the target and then let them find the way to achieve it themselves. If there is a problem, the staffs can talk with the managers. Postponement of the deadline is possible and negotiable with the Thai superiors. (Korkiat)

Therefore, conflicts and misunderstandings are possible in the area of supervision and training styles of the Japanese and those of the Thais. The Japanese superiors focus on procedure while the Thai superiors tend to look at the outcome. The Thai subordinates may not be used to the fact that they need to report to their Japanese superiors often about his job; they might feel that they are not trusted to do the job.

There are several forms or strategies Japanese superiors use to supervise their Thai subordinates such as scolding, information sharing, expecting expression of

opinion, and decision-making processes. Some of the strategies do not work well in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. The following are some of the strategies the Japanese use in their supervision.

Scolding

Scolding is a form of Japanese supervision style. It is common for Japanese superiors to scold their subordinates. Both Japanese superiors and subordinates understand the function of scolding. They have learned that scolding is the way for superiors to supervise and teach their subordinates. After being scolded, the subordinates usually feel guilty and then try to improve their performance accordingly. This system seems to work appropriately in Japan. However, when it comes to the settings of joint venture companies, especially between Japanese and Thai people, where two different cultural members come into play, the results and feedbacks may differ.

In Thailand, it is not common for superiors to scold or blame their subordinates in public. Normally, if it is a severe case, superiors will discuss the matter with subordinates in private to prevent loss of face. However, it is possible to see some teachers, particularly in elementary, secondary, and high schools, scolding and punishing students when they make mistakes or do not obey their teachers. For instance, a teacher may punish a student who does not finish his/ her assignments on time by scolding and spanking the student. It is common for students to be punished by teachers when they are still in schools because students are young and may not know what is right or wrong. Nevertheless, in the college or university level, professors do not usually scold or punish students like what is done in schools because university students are considered as grown-up and mature. The professors should use a different way to deal with university students, namely talking and warning, instead of scolding and hitting. Likewise, such values and practices are common in the workplace. Superiors do not scold their subordinates because subordinates are

considered as grown-up and mature. It is more proper for superiors to talk to subordinates when the subordinates do something wrong. Therefore, due to such cultural differences in the supervision style, conflicts and misunderstandings are possible between the Japanese and the Thais.

From the interviews, Japanese superiors explained the function of their supervision style, particularly scolding as well as their experience and analysis of scolding in Thailand. To start with, three Japanese managers elucidated the function of scolding as follows.

Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager of Marketing and Customer Service Department of a joint venture manufacturer, explained that scolding functions as a teaching method for superiors to educate their subordinates. He elucidated, "A boss is considered as an educator, so he/ she can scold his/ her subordinates. Scolding should be done by a section manager (lower than a department manager). It's a process to learn."

As I had an opportunity to work with Mr. Yamamoto for about two years, I never saw or heard that Mr. Yamamoto scolded his Thai subordinates. Instead, he was a decent and rather silent person. For the Thais, he seemed to be a *jai yen* (cool heart) person. *Jai yen* is opposite to a hot-tempered personality. A *jai yen* person is one who does not get angry easily and who is tolerant in dealing with other people. Mr. Yamamoto was considered a *jai yen* person because he did not get angry with his subordinates easily even though they did some mistakes. Instead, he gradually and calmly taught his subordinates.

Mr. Hashiyama, a general manager of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, explained that severe training, to which scolding was related, was commonly provided to new recruits to learn about the job in the company. He said,

When we teach the new graduates, we don't speak very softly. We train them like a military. For example, the subordinates are asked to write a letter and make several corrections. They do it like a military. After they recognize that they are able to work by themselves, then

those new graduates will be treated like a grown-up. It is a tradition. (Mr. Hashiyama)

However, in Thailand, Mr. Hashiyama learned that such a system did not work properly. Hence, he never scolded his Thai subordinates because he said that they might not understand the function of supervision and learning by scolding. Instead, he tried to use different methods to control his subordinates such as performance evaluation, based on salary level. Again, such a system did not work in his company. He explained,

The salary level and evaluation are legitimate for superiors to use to control their subordinates. I could use it in Japan, and my subordinates would never leave the company. However, in the country like Thailand, it is difficult. I never talk very hard to Thai staff like I do to my Japanese staff. Usually, I talked very severely to my Japanese staff. For my Thai staff, I talked very mild to them because Thai people may not understand the Japanese culture. (Mr. Hashiyama)

Perhaps, using salary level and performance evaluation as means to encourage better work performance for Thai subordinates do not work well in Thailand because Thai people do not have as strong a commitment to the company as the Japanese do. Changing a new job to gain higher promotion is common among Thai people. Thai people seem not to be so patient to work for the same company to gain higher promotions if they do not see any future working there.

Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of Administration Department of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, elaborated that scolding was “a guilt system.” He added, “Scolding is common in Japan. I was scolded often by my boss in Japan. However, it is not a similar case in Thailand. I have to adjust myself. I am trying not to express my feelings and not to scold to my staff.”

Mr. Kobayashi did not expand the meaning of scolding as a “guilt system.” From the interviews, I think that his reference of scolding as a “guilt system” is that

subordinates usually feel guilty after they are scolded by their superiors. Thus, the subordinates will try to improve their job performance.

From the interviews with other Japanese managers about their experience of scolding in Thailand, most of them admitted that they had to adjust themselves in this issue. They said that they could not scold their Thai subordinates even though some of the Japanese superiors still believed in the idea of scolding because Thai subordinates might not understand the essence of scolding as a learning and teaching process.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technology and Quality Control Department of a joint venture manufacturer in Thailand, said, "For newly a graduated engineer, I was very patient, because if I scold the engineer, he might be withered. On the contrary, my encouragement would give him enough ability in a short period."

Mr. Uchida, a section manager of Sales and Marketing Division of a joint venture manufacturer, was in the position to do the scolding, according to Mr. Yamamoto. Mr. Yamamoto said that section managers were those who often performed scolding. Mr. Uchida said,

Scolding among men is common to instruct and educate subordinates. Subordinates do not feel insulted. The purpose is that the boss wants subordinates to be more efficient to the company. In Thailand when I instruct my female subordinates, I speak to them softly instead of scolding. I do not scold my staff in front of others because Thai people have pride. If I am angry, I will try to keep my feelings and explains the reasons. (Mr. Uchida)

Mr. Nishii, a vice president of a Japanese trading company, added, "Scolding depends on an organizational culture; at my company, there are not many cases of scolding."

Mr. Kato, a coordination manager of Sales and Marketing Division at a joint venture manufacturer, whom I once worked with, explained and analyzed scolding in

both cultural contexts of Japan and Thailand. He also added his experience of scolding and his practices in Thailand.

Scolding is common. It is used to supervise subordinates, but not to scold too much in front of others. Japanese people usually scold their subordinates in front of others. In my cases, when I scold my staff. I have to make sure that I do not scold too loud and that others do not hear it. If the subordinates are called into the room to talk, it is going to be a serious problem. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Kato was a famous and friendly manager in Sales and Marketing Division of the joint venture manufacturer whom I worked with. We talked about several cases in which subordinates, including me, were scolded by other Japanese managers. Some of them were upset by the scolding. Mr. Kato believed that scolding might be one of the reasons for resignation at my previous company. He explained that scolding was not a good thing for both Japanese and Thai people since people being scolded usually lost face, especially when they were scolded in front of other people. He explained,

Thai people do not like to be scolded. But, for the Japanese, if scolding is not so hard, it is okay. Similar to Thai people, the Japanese think that it is not good to say bad things in front of others. From my opinion, it is not good to scold my staff in front of other people. (Mr. Kato)

According to Japanese culture, scolding is common. It is a way for superiors to teach and supervise their subordinates. Nevertheless, such a supervision style via scolding does not seem to work well in Thailand because scolding can cause loss of face for the Thais, especially if the scolding is done in public or in front of other staff members. From the above interviews, most of the Japanese expatriates working in Thailand realized that such a practice of scolding was not common in Thai culture. As a result, the Japanese tried to avoid such a supervision style via scolding although

many of the Japanese managers still believed in scolding as an effective method to supervise their subordinates in a long term.

Two Thai female managers –Woraya and Preeya – elaborated that they hardly saw Japanese superiors scold Thai subordinates. Instead, they saw some situations in which Japanese superiors scolded their Japanese staff in Thailand.

Woraya, a deputy general manager of a big Japanese trading company in Thailand, said that she saw some Japanese superiors scolding Thai male subordinates, but the case was not so severe. Nevertheless, she saw a lot of cases in which Japanese superiors scolded their Japanese subordinates. She further explained,

It is their tradition. I feel that subordinates in a lower rank are likely to be scolded a lot, especially when their superior is stressed. I notice that Japanese bosses do not scold female subordinates. I once saw a Japanese subordinate being scolded until he fainted. (Woraya)

Preeya, an administration manager of a joint venture in Thailand who worked with Mr. Ota, said,

I have never seen my Japanese superiors scolding Thai subordinates, but only scolding their Japanese subordinates. A Japanese middle manager told me that a Japanese managing director scolded him but not Thai staff because the managing director was pretentious. (Mr. Ota)

Although the above interviews show that Japanese superiors understand that scolding is not a proper method to supervise their Thai subordinates and that Thai managers do really not see the Japanese scolding their staff, there are still some reports saying that Japanese managers used harsh words with Thai subordinates or blamed the subordinates, which cause loss of face and an unpleasant work atmosphere. It is possible that what Japanese managers do not consider as scolding seems like scolding to Thai subordinates. Below are some cases of Thai subordinates' experience of

Japanese supervision styles and some examples of harsh words and blaming used by Japanese superiors.

Japanese Supervision Style and Thai Loss of Face

To better understand the situations in which different cultural values come into play, particularly in the case of Japanese supervision by scolding, it is important to listen to Thai subordinates' voices. They may misinterpret Japanese scolding because it is not common for Thai superiors to scold or blame their subordinates in front of others. Such scolding and blaming can result in loss of face of subordinates. Although face is a significant issue for both Japanese and Thai people, in the settings of the workplace, scolding may also cause loss of face for the Japanese. It is common for Japanese superiors to scold Japanese subordinates in the workplace. Thus, loss of face within a tight working group does not matter much for Japanese subordinates. Instead, the "inside" loss of face is felt more outside the working group. On the contrary, since Thai people tend to avoid frictions and conflicts, Thai superiors avoid scolding and blaming Thai subordinates in the workplace, particularly in front of other work colleagues. Loss of face is easily felt when Thai people are blamed or scolded since Thai people value harmony. It is, thus, not surprising that Thai subordinates are not used to scolding. It is likely that Thai subordinates lose face and feel uncomfortable when they are blamed or scolded in front of their colleagues. Thai superiors usually discuss problems or warn their subordinates in private.

Besides such loss of face, for the Japanese, scolding serves as a teaching and learning method; superiors who perform scolding expect that their subordinates who are scolded should improve their performance. Nevertheless, when it comes to Japanese-Thai joint ventures, the feedback may not be as the Japanese expected since Thai people do not understand the function of scolding as a teaching and learning method.

From the interviews with Thai subordinates, they often complained that Japanese superiors often used harsh words to blame them. They often felt discouraged. Some of their comments are as follows.

Supranee, a senior delivery control staff, cited some harsh sentences which her Japanese superiors used to blame her when she did some mistakes. She said that she often felt discouraged by those words. She said, “Japanese superiors use harsh words to criticize or blame me without concern for my feelings. They said, ‘Why did you this? Who told you?’ when I made some mistakes.

Chalermchai, a sales representative of a joint venture manufacturer, also gave some examples of harsh sentences his Japanese superiors used to blame him. He pointed out that because of those harsh words and the way the Japanese blamed their Thai subordinates in front of others, the subordinates often felt humiliated and lost face. Some of the sentences he cited as an example are as follows.

I once heard my Japanese boss blaming a subordinate in front of others. My boss said, ‘Use your brain; you are not a messenger who just gets a message and says whatever he is told to say. We hire you as a Bachelor’s Degree, not a Vocational Degree.’ I think my boss should use psychology or a proper way to talk to subordinates because subordinates usually feel humiliated and they lose face.
(Chalermchai)

Personally, I went through similar experience before. The same Japanese manager whom Chalermchai mentioned was my previous superior. He once used the same sentences to scold me in front of my Thai manager and work colleagues in the office when I could not understand some assignments. I was very discouraged and humiliated because I did not understand his intention of scolding and blaming me like that. I considered his action as bad intention because I thought that he could use another way to teach me or tell me about the job instead of scolding and blaming me in public.

Noradee, a sales representative, and Preeda, a technical service engineer who worked at the same company as Chalermchai also gave two additional instances in which Japanese superiors used harsh words to supervise their subordinates.

I think that my Japanese boss often finds a responsible person when there is a mistake. Sometimes he called a person into the meeting room where customers were present and blamed that person for a mistake in front of the customers. It is considered loss of face. I feel bad about that. My Japanese boss often uses harsh words to blame me such as 'use your brain.' One of the Japanese managers at the plant did not try to understand us (sales representatives) when we requested that he arrange a plant tour for customers. Instead, he once sent an e-mail using sarcastic words such as 'I am not your servant' when I requested him to prepare a plant tour. (Noradee)

I encountered a similar situation as Noradee when I had to arrange a plant tour for my customer. I had heard about that situation from her, so I requested my Japanese and Thai superior to work that out for me. It went well. I was also lucky because my Thai manager joined that plant visit as well. That Japanese manager did not complain much about the event.

Preeda also cited some examples in which he felt humiliated by his Japanese superior's comments on his ability. He said,

The Japanese often asked 'why'. I felt like they were trying to test me when my Japanese boss asked me for reasons even though he already knew the answer. I often felt that I lost face if I could not answer his question. When I gave a wrong answer, my boss often laughed at me. On the other hand, in the same situation, Thai boss would tell the answer right away. That's the way Thai people learn things. (Preeda)

In the above situation of Preeda, cultural differences and expectations play an important factor. His Japanese superior might want to teach him to think in order to

do the job himself. However, Preeda expected that his boss would be a teacher and mentor to give him the answer. In addition, I think in the case of Preeda, personal characteristics of the superiors and subordinates' interpretation of the situation are important. Preeda's Japanese superior might have used other methods to guide Preeda to think and do the job himself. Or, Preeda was used to the way he learned from his previous Thai manager that the Thai manager often gave an answer right away without making Preeda think.

Japanese Wish for Expression of Opinions and Roles of Thai Subordinates

Not only do Thai subordinates have some misunderstandings about their Japanese superiors, but the superiors also misunderstand some behaviors of the subordinates. Many Japanese superiors complained that Thai subordinates just followed their superiors' instruction without expressing any opinions. The Japanese superiors might expect some ideas from their Thai subordinates; however, it turned out that the subordinates became silent and did not share any opinion about a certain issue.

Usually, Japanese managers are likely to encourage Thai subordinates to think and take initiative while Thai subordinates want Japanese superiors to tell them what to do. The following are some of the Japanese complaints about their Thai subordinates not participating in sharing and exchanging ideas with them.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technical and Quality Control Department of a joint venture manufacturer in Thailand, said, "Generally, the Thai follows his boss's direction blindly. Without arguing, whenever boss directs a wrong way, everybody goes the wrong direction."

Mr. Uchida, a managing director of a joint venture manufacturer, explained,

In Japan, people usually speak their opinion in a meeting, but Thai people do not do enough discussion. They just listen to their superiors, and even have no objection to Thai boss among Thai people. It is acceptable to have

objections to a boss. That's why it is called discussion.
(Mr. Uchida)

Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of Administration Department of a trading company, told me that his company in Japan complained about Thai staff whom he sent to attend a seminar in Japan. The mother company said that those staff were incompetent since they did not share any opinion in the meeting. Mr. Kobayashi said, "The personnel manager there said that Thai staff were very shy. They did not insist on what they wanted to say strongly. They often said '*Mai Pen Rai*' in Thai (or 'it is okay' in English)." I asked if those people had overseas education because Thai people who had prior education overseas would become more assertive and expressive. Mr. Kobayashi replied,

The Thai staff did not, but one of them could speak Japanese well. They just did not express their opinion. Japanese people can accept different opinions. However, they should obey regulations and know limitation when to express opinion. Thai staff should say opinion, but not so often insist on their opinion. (Mr. Kobayashi)

I also asked Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager of Marketing and Customer Services, whom I worked with before, about Japanese managers' reactions if their Thai subordinates wanted to express their opinions. Mr. Yamamoto answered,

People who work for my company in Japan are more aggressive; bosses often make strong requests. Subordinates should discuss with the boss if things are not correct. It is possible for subordinates to request the boss to make any change. If the job is too difficult, it is alright to ask for help from the boss. However, in Thailand, subordinates are hesitant to talk. In Japan, the subordinates dare to speak out more. I do not think that it is because of the language problems, but it might be because of differences in cultural and educational backgrounds. (Mr. Yamamoto)

From Mr. Yamamoto's reply, when he mentioned educational background as one of the causes for Thai subordinates not being assertive in sharing opinions, he might mean that most of the Thai subordinates had less working experience. Thus, they did not dare to share or exchange their opinions with their Japanese superiors who they believed had a lot of working experience. In addition, Thai subordinates are reluctant to express their opinions because they are afraid that they may say something incorrect or improper, which can result in loss of face and their inability to do a job. Thai subordinates also believe that for most of the issues, it is the managers' responsibilities to make a decision and to solve the problems. Moreover, Thai subordinates do not have expertise for the job because Japanese companies usually hire people to work regardless of their prior degrees. They prefer new graduates and then provide those new recruits with in-house training so that they will be able to perform a task for a certain position.

For me, it has been rather surprising that one of the annoying situations in Japanese-Thai joint ventures centers around the silent reaction of Thai subordinates and Japanese superiors' wish for more opinions from the subordinates. Superficially, members of both countries should not have had such misunderstandings in this situation because people from both nations have been through a similar learning process. At school, when they are young, they are taught to listen to their teacher. They do not have a chance to express their opinions or ask many questions. Thus, it is possible for Thai subordinates to be silent and obedient to senior people when they grow up. Following their superiors' instruction without any objection may be the way to show respect to their superiors. It is not appropriate to express any opposition against their superiors since they may humiliate their superiors.

On the contrary, according to Merry White (1987), Japanese children are encouraged to work as teamwork. They are required to form *han* or working groups and to give some opinions. Everyone in the group must give "reflections." There are meetings called "reflection meetings." In the work settings, superiors expect to make

decisions by considering ideas that emerge from various people who have a chance to study the issues before.

Additionally, another obstacle which makes Thai subordinates become speechless is the language problem. It is difficult for non-English speaking people to express their opinions in a second language. Another reason is that most of the Thai subordinates working for joint ventures in Thailand are those who just have graduated from universities and have less working experience. As a result, they are not sure whether their opinion is correct. Besides, they do not want to lose face in the meeting if they express any irrelevant and wrong ideas in front of their superiors and colleagues in the meeting.

I also asked Japanese superiors what they believe could cause Thai subordinates to become less expressive. It turned out to be that most of the Japanese superiors had ideas similar to the ones I just mentioned.

Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager, concluded that Thai subordinates might have less working experience, so they were afraid to express their opinion in front of their more experienced superiors. He answered,

In Japan, I can ask for advice from my subordinates because there are some experienced people. Those people are my subordinates even though they are older than me. In Japan, I can exchange opinion more. But, in Thailand, my subordinates are much younger and less experienced. I have to be their teacher. (Mr. Yamamoto)

Mr. Nishii, a vice president of a Japanese trading company, believes that Thai subordinates were submissive and silent because they wanted to show respect to the presence of their superiors by not showing any objection to them. He explained, "It is Thai characters to be submissive in the meeting; they are not sure if it is appropriate to assert themselves in the meeting where a senior boss is present. Thai people who have education overseas tend to speak out more."

Mr. Yamazaki, a director and general manager of Administration Division, of a Japanese company in Thailand, explained that Japanese and Thai people were similar because they both tended to be silent in the meeting. He believed that language could be a problem which makes Thai subordinates become less expressive. Mr. Yamazaki said,

Thai people are similar to Japanese people because they do not express their opinion directly. So, in the meeting in Japan and Thailand, silence is common. Thai staff seem to be less active. But, I think that maybe it is because of the language problem. They do not talk too much. However, in Singapore and Guam, people have stronger characters.
(Mr. Yamazaki)

I also questioned whether Mr. Yamazaki preferred his Thai subordinates to talk more. He replied, "I should talk to them since I am in Thailand. I am the one who should learn Thai culture. But, sometimes I asked Thai staff to express opinion more directly because I do not know what they think."

From the interviews, Japanese managers gave several reasons they thought made Thai subordinates become less expressive. The Japanese believe that Thai subordinates were young and inexperienced. As a result, Thai staff were reluctant to express their opinions in fear that they might say something wrong. Japanese managers also believed that Thai subordinates needed to be submissive and show respect to their superiors. Thus, the Thais avoided expressing their opinions or showing any objection to their superiors. A Language problem is another factor which causes Thai staff not to express their opinions.

During the interviews, I also asked Thai managers and subordinates what characteristics subordinates should have. It is not surprising when most of them believe that subordinates should be submissive and follow their superiors' instructions without showing any objection against their superiors. Such comments from Thai subordinates explain why Thai subordinates do not express their opinion, but they just follow their superiors' instructions. Some of their explanations are discussed below.

Woraya, a Thai female manager of a Japanese trading firm, said, “I believe that subordinates should be submissive to their bosses and never argue. They just need to follow their boss’s instructions.”

Panudej, a Thai male manager of a Japanese trading company, also believed that subordinates should be submissive and follow superiors’ instructions. However, he added that some Japanese managers who had prior overseas working experience tended to be more open-minded and accept subordinates’ opinions. Panudej explained,

Subordinates have to follow the orders of the Japanese superiors very strictly; they can’t argue back. It is like in a military. However, it changes because some Japanese expatriates have overseas experience. They have become more open-minded to accept and understand other cultures. My first Japanese boss was very traditional like those in a military. The second one had prior working experience in San Francisco, so he was more open-minded. The third one was also traditional; he could not speak English well, so he had his own interpreter. My current boss is nice; he has been stationed overseas such as in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Therefore, Japanese expatriates who have overseas experience tend to understand their subordinates well. (Panudej)

As a Thai subordinate, Noradee also believed that subordinates should be submissive and less expressive with their superiors. They should just follow their instructions and be quiet. She said,

From my observation as I visited customers with my Japanese bosses, in the meeting, the youngest person in the lower position or less senior people should talk little and let the senior people make a deal or handle the situation. People in the same position have a right to deal with people in the same position. I hardly saw people in the lower position being aggressive, making a deal, or being assertive in the meetings. (Noradee)

From the interviews with Thai managers and subordinates, Thai people believe that subordinates are supposed to be obedient and show respect to their superiors by avoiding any objection to their superiors. After considering opinions from both Japanese superiors, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates, it is possible for conflicts and misunderstandings to occur because the Japanese and the Thais seem to have different expectations and roles of expressing opinions. Japanese managers expect Thai subordinates to communicate their ideas more while the Thais think that they should be submissive and avoid any opposition against their superiors.

In the Meeting: Use of Japanese Language

Meetings are contexts in which conflicts and misunderstandings are possible because Japanese and Thai people may have different protocols when they participate in the meetings. In this section, some effects of the use of Japanese language as a major language in the meetings are explored. Thai subordinates complained that the Japanese usually spoke and discussed business in Japanese when they went out with their superiors. The Japanese sometimes did not translate the agenda of the meeting for Thai subordinates. The Thai subordinates often felt uncomfortable about the situation. Thus, they did not want to go to the meeting with Japanese superiors to see Japanese clients as they always discussed business in Japanese. For Thai managers or those who had leverage in negotiation with the superiors, they dared to refuse to join the meeting or avoided going with them, but for those who could not avoid going, they usually complained about the situation.

Panudej, a male manager of a Japanese trading company, said, "I will avoid a meeting in which the majority is Japanese. I will sneak out and talk to Thai staff, instead. If I cannot get out of the meeting, I will have to stay and my boss will translate the agenda for me."

As a manager who has been working for the company for more than ten years, Panudej has authority to refuse his participation in the meeting with his Japanese

superiors. Or, he can find some excuses not to join the meeting. On the other hand, for younger subordinates, they are afraid to reject their Japanese superiors. Thus, they have no choice but to attend the meeting.

Besides the fact that Thai subordinates should meet clients to establish good relationships with them, I asked some Japanese managers why they took their subordinates along with them to see Japanese clients. However, only Mr. Ota, a managing director of a joint venture manufacturer, answered my question. Others did not really answer my question.

Mr. Ota elucidated, "In a meeting, if there are all Japanese participants and only a Thai person is present, the Japanese will bring Thai staff to show their power that they have a person under their supervision." He also added that Japanese managers usually discussed business in Japanese if most of the managers were Japanese because some Japanese did not want to speak English in the meeting.

Mr. Watanabe, a vice president and general manager of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, explained,

I usually go with my Thai staff. Some Japanese customers may prefer discussing in Japanese. So, I speak Japanese in most cases. Then, after talking with the customers, I will translate that to my staff. If the company needs staff to speak Japanese, the staff should speak Japanese. Japanese language ability is preferable. (Mr. Watanabe)

I think that Japanese superiors tend to speak Japanese in the meeting because it is more convenient to discuss business in their own native language. At the same time, it is possible for non-Japanese people who cannot understand Japanese language to become frustrated if they have to attend the meetings in which Japanese language is used as a major language. From my experience, when I was a Sales Representative at a Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer, I went to several meetings with my Japanese superiors in which they used only Japanese language. I felt very uncomfortable because I could not understand their conversations. Some of my

Japanese superiors interpreted some conversations for me; however, sometimes my Japanese superiors were too busy to do the interpretation. I often felt very awkward in the meetings. Usually, after the meetings, Japanese superiors explained the agendas of the meetings to me so that I could prepare the reports for the meetings. My Japanese superiors usually asked me for my opinions about issues which emerged from the meetings. In the behind-the-scene situations in which I was asked to express my opinions, I felt more comfortable to say what I really thought, instead of presenting my ideas in front of other colleagues.

Information Sharing

Due to the fact that Japanese managers often discuss business in Japanese language in the meetings, Thai subordinates think that their Japanese superiors speak Japanese in the meetings because Japanese superiors do not want to share information with Thai subordinates and the Japanese want to hide some information from them. Both parties think that their counterparts hold back information; misunderstandings and conflicts may arise from this situation.

Mr. Nishii, a vice president of a Japanese trading company complained, "Thai people seem to hold back their knowledge; they do not share information."

A Thai manager also commented that Japanese superiors did not share information with him. Punrawee was my previous manager when I worked for the joint venture manufacturer in Thailand. Before Punrawee, I had another Thai male manager whose name is Sith. However, Sith requested to be transferred back to his previous company because he felt uncomfortable working with the Japanese. He often shared with me his difficult situations working for the Japanese superiors. He said that Japanese superiors usually discussed business in Japanese in the meeting. He could not understand Japanese. The Japanese often held the second meeting without him after they finished a meeting with him. He felt left out from the group. Thus, he decided to submit his resignation and returned to his previous company. Punrawee, a

Thai male manager, was his successor. He has educational background in Japan; he earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration in Japan. He can understand Japanese. Although he seemed to be able to get along well with Japanese superiors in the company, he complained that the Japanese held back some information and that they did not inform him of any new policy or change. Punrawee said,

The Japanese do not share information. For instance, they do not inform me of a new expatriate from Japan who will be a successor of a Japanese manager who is sick. Sometimes they do not share information such as how to organize the job. Intensive communication among people in the group should be encouraged and information should also be shared; people in the group will learn about the information. It is hard for me to be one of the group members; I think it is just a language problem. (Punrawee)

Most of the Thai subordinates also complained that Japanese superiors usually discussed business in the meeting with Japanese customers in Japanese. In most cases, they did not translate the agenda into English for the subordinates. Or, the subordinates often felt that the Japanese superiors did not tell them all of the information.

Supranee, a senior delivery control staff of a Japanese company, complained about the situation in which Japanese superiors discussed business in Japanese and sometimes she did not have an access in some information. She said,

When I visited Japanese customers with my boss, they usually spoke Japanese in spite of my presence. My boss translated the meeting's agendas for me sometimes. Japanese managers often do not share information with Thai staff. The superior and the customer often made some agreements and did not inform the subordinates. I once complained about that to my boss. I sometimes told my customer that I did not have power to do something. If the customer wants it, he/ she should contact my Japanese superior directly. (Supranee)

Chalermchai, a sales representative of a Japanese-Thai manufacturer, told me the similar situation as Supranee experienced. Chalermchai explained,

When I visited Japanese customers with my Japanese superiors, they spoke Japanese in the meetings. They usually did not translate the discussion for me right away. My boss told me later about the discussion in the meeting. I feel that the bosses sometimes do not tell me about some information. (Chalermchai)

Noradee, a sales representative who worked at the same company as Chalermchai, also complained about sharing information. She added that some Japanese customers did not want to share the information with her even though those customers were her accounts. The customers often requested her superiors to contact them directly, instead.

In the meeting, if most of the participants are Japanese, they are likely to speak Japanese. They will tell me about the meeting later. However, I feel that I might lose some points. The Japanese prefer talking and dealing with people from higher or the same positions. They do not want to waste time talking with people from lower positions or with any non-Japanese persons. For example, when I called a Japanese customer to ask for some information, the customer said that he did not know anything. That customer refused to give me any information and told me to have my boss call him, instead. Later, I found out that my boss could get the information from the customer. Japanese customers sometimes do not cooperate with me well unless I ask my boss to use his authority. (Noradee)

Noradee also gave another example about information sharing. She said that the Japanese often sent an e-mail in Japanese. She, thus, could not understand it. On the other hand, they often asked Thai subordinates to translate some information into English. Moreover, they often double-checked some information with Thai

subordinates even though they already had it and they did not share it with their Thai staff.

Piti, a senior sales staff of a Japanese trading company, cited a similar situation in which his Japanese superior did not share some information with him. He finally added that he wanted his superior to give Thai subordinates more authority to make decisions. He requested the superior to rely more on the subordinates and to let them have full responsibility for their tasks. He said,

The Japanese are patriotic. They honor each other. They do not want to talk to Thai people. For example, I talked to a salesman of a customer. Then, that guy talked to my Japanese boss, instead. Later, the Japanese bosses discussed with each other and finalized the contract without informing me of the final results. (Piti)

Thai subordinates felt uncomfortable in the meetings in which Japanese superiors discussed business in Japanese; Thai subordinates also complained that Japanese superiors held back some information and some discussion with customers. It is possible for conflicts and misunderstandings to happen in such a situation in which people believe that the other party holds back some information.

Lack of information sharing from Japanese managers can reflect Japanese lack of trust in Thai subordinates. As I mentioned in the previous chapter of vertical relationship, it takes time and effort for non-Japanese people to be accepted into the group. In this case of information sharing, it is possible that the Thai subordinates have not yet succeeded in entering the Japanese circle of trust. Or, the Japanese felt more comfortable and practical to conduct business in their native language, especially with their Japanese counterparts.

Authority and Decision-Making Process

Decision making process is an important procedure in business operations. In one day, business people have to be involved in making numerous decisions, ranging from offering price quotations to customers to ordering raw materials. To make the best decision, each culture has its own process. Conflicts, frustration, and misunderstandings may occur when people from different cultural backgrounds need to participate in the same decision making process because they may have different ways to approach and solve a problem. In the case of Japanese-Thai joint venture companies, misunderstandings and frustration are likely to happen since they have different decision-making processes.

From the interviews, some of the Thai managers and subordinates complained that their voices and opinions were not heard when they tried to propose their ideas in any decision making process. We can see that misunderstandings and frustration happened in this case because the Thais did not expect a different decision-making procedure of the Japanese. To understand these attitudes, the decision-making processes of Japanese and Thai people are examined.

In Thailand, decisions are not made as a team. Instead, the most senior person is usually a key decision maker because he/ she is assumed to possess knowledge, wisdom, and experience to make a sound decision. Although it is acceptable for the most senior boss to make a decision, he/ she is expected to ask for opinions from their subordinates and make the best decision for the benefits of all concerned (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1997: 63).

Unlike Thai people, Japanese businesspeople have a very unique decision making process. For non-Japanese people, Japanese decision-making process is a time-consuming process. However, it makes sense for the Japanese. In Japan, the decision-making process involves many people; it is not just a decision made mainly by an individual like that in Thailand. Consensus agreement needs to be reached to come up with a decent decision to ensure that the decision is supported throughout the

organization and that several parties in the company help check the proposed ideas to minimize possible errors (March 1992; Nishiyama 2000; Otsubo 1993). The Japanese decision-making process is as follows.

Subordinate initiators are assigned to prepare a proposal in a written form, called *ringisho*. The subordinates need to make careful research to write up a good proposal. Then, the proposal will be circulated to several concerned authorities. The informal meetings will be held to discuss the proposal; this process is called *nemawashi*, groundwork discussions. All concerned parties will give some feedback to the subordinate initiators to adjust the proposal during this process of *nemawashi*. In this informal discussion, the subordinates try to learn who supports and who opposes the proposal and then they need to try to convince and persuade all parties to reach consensus approval for the proposal. Usually, the decision should be reached during the informal *nemawashi* discussion. After the proposal is informally approved by all concerned authorities, a formal meeting will finally be held to formally approve the project (March 1992; Nishiyama 2000; Otsubo 1993).

After considering the decision-making processes in Japan and Thailand, it is not surprising that Japanese and Thai people may encounter conflicts and misunderstandings when they have to involve in the same decision-making process. When I conducted the interviews, Korkiat, an assistant to sales manager, and Suwat, a sales representative, who worked in the same company, complained that their Japanese superiors did not give them authority to make decisions. Apart from the fact that the Japanese superiors did not share some information, they claimed that they felt that their superiors did not trust them.

Suwat wanted his Japanese superiors to share the information they had with Thai staff and let him be involved in the process more. He explained that when he had to deal with Japanese customers or trading companies, it was likely that the information would not be shared with him. Usually, his Japanese boss was more involved and those Japanese customers and trading companies preferred contacting and dealing directly with his boss. Thus, he felt left out. Suwat said,

The Japanese superiors usually have a meeting in Japanese and do not translate the agenda for me. Sometimes, they do not tell us about the deal they already made with customers. Moreover, my Japanese boss usually asked me to find information before making a decision although the boss has already made the decision. I do not understand why they do that. On the other hand, my Thai boss usually went out with me to gather market information. With my Thai boss, we work side by side like friends. However, with my Japanese boss, he made a decision most of the times without letting me participate in the process. I feel that my Japanese boss does not share information with me or give me authority to make decisions. (Suwat)

Korkiat, an assistant manager to the Japanese sales department manager, raised some situations which made him feel frustrated and uncomfortable when working with the Japanese. The first one is that he felt that subordinates were not given authority to make decisions. As he was also responsible for sales, he needed authority to be able to make decisions when he had to discuss business with his customers or offer them any deal. However, he complained that it was very difficult for him in such a situation because his Japanese boss did not give him authority to make any decision. He had to go back and consult with his boss; it was a time-consuming process. Finally, he complained about Japanese delay in the decision-making process.

A decision is usually made by a senior person. When I offer solution to the problem, the Japanese tend to listen to the solutions from the older staff who have more credentials and experience. I feel that trust given to subordinates in decision making is low. As far as offering price quotations to my customers, my Japanese manager gives me less power to negotiate or make a decision. How can the customer trust me if I do not have authority to make any decision? Sometimes, it turned out to be that my customers do not want to talk with sales representatives because the customers feel that there is no use to talk to the sales representatives who do not have power to make a decision. Moreover, I feel frustrated with the delay in Japanese decision-making process. The Japanese want to

delegate responsibility to all parties so they need consensus in the meeting. They ask around for each topic to reach agreement on one decision. I think they are afraid to make a decision and to take responsibility for such a decision by themselves, so they need to ask around. On the other hand, American people have a quicker decision-making process. One person can make decisions to meet customers' needs promptly. They dare to be responsible for any mistake. (Korkiat)

Noradee, a sale representative at the same company as Suwat and Korkiat, also cited an example of two Thai managers, Sith and Punrawee who did not get authority to make decisions. Noradee even considered such a situation as Japanese discrimination at work. She said that Thai employees had fewer chances to advance in the company because most of the Japanese expatriates were in managerial positions.

It seems that Thai managers do not really have a real authority to make any decision as Japanese managers do in the same company. I think that the Thai managers are discriminated. An example of this can be seen in several meetings. After the meeting in which Thai managers could attend, Japanese managers usually held the second meeting right away where they spoke Japanese. For the second meeting, the Thai managers were not invited to attend. This is considered discrimination. (Noradee)

From the interviews, Thai managers and subordinates complained that the Japanese consensus style of decision making was time-consuming and that the Thais were not given real authority to make decisions. Thai subordinates preferred that they could gain authority to make some decisions and that sometimes they did not have to go through the Japanese consensus style of decision making because they needed to get some solutions right away.

From my experience working in a Japanese-Thai joint venture, I was in the similar situation as ones cited by Thai subordinates above. My clients asked for price quotations. However, I did not have any authority to tell my clients the price

quotations. I had to consult with my Japanese superiors; such a process was time-consuming. I was concerned that the clients would probably buy the products from our competitor, instead. Sith, my former Thai superior, told me that in his previous company, subordinates were given authority to some extent to give price quotations to customers right away. Thus, I think it is important to adjust some strategies accordingly to be competitive in the market and to accommodate both cultures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the above are some misunderstandings, conflicts, and frustrating situations which occurred in several Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand owing to cultural differences between cultural members from Japan and Thailand. Scolding, use of Japanese language in the meetings, keeping some information, and delegating authority in decision-making processes are some strategies and tools of supervision used by the Japanese. Likewise, Thai subordinates use some strategies to show resistance to Japanese superiors, namely use of silence.

Conflicts and misunderstandings occurring in relation to the supervision style via several strategies are likely to come from different cultural values and practices of both countries. Scolding is a common supervision style of the Japanese superiors whereas using harsh words and blaming can cause loss of face for Thai subordinates. Moreover, in the meetings, the Japanese tend to discuss business in Japanese because it may be convenient and practical for them to speak their native language, especially when the majority of the participants are Japanese people. Meanwhile, Thai subordinates do not understand the Japanese consensus style of decision making; they think that such a process is time-consuming. The Thais also think that they are not included in the decision-making process.

To successfully deal with people from different cultural backgrounds in intercultural settings, two-way communication and cultural knowledge are crucial. Those Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates would have encountered fewer

misunderstandings and unpleasant working situations if they communicated and learned about each other more. To conclude, I would like to present a quote from Supansa, a sales assistant of a joint venture manufacturer. She worked in the same company as Korkiat, Suwat, and me. She described her pleasant working conditions with her new Japanese superior. Since they had two-way communication and tried to learn about each other as well as adjusted themselves, they were happily working together. Supansa said,

My new Japanese boss always relies on two-way communication with me. I feel that my boss trusts me because he always shares information with me. When there is a problem, we will be able to solve it effectively. I also feel that I am included as part of the team. That increases my willingness to work. In contrast, my ex-Japanese boss did not share any information with me. I often felt that I was kept as an outsider of the team. (Supansa)

CHAPTER 9: GENDER: CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Gender is another factor which has some influences on the organization and its employees since men and women work together in the same organization. Even though men and women are brought up in the same culture, they may have different characteristics, values, and constraints. In most of the Asian countries, unlike men who are taught to be a leader and head of the household, women are likely to be submissive as followers and housewives.

In the past, roles of women in Japan and Thailand in general were similar. They usually stayed home, taking care of the household, their children, and their elder family members while their male counterparts went out to work and earned living to support the family financially. However, in this current era of globalization, with higher education and the doors open to the business and industrial arenas for women, more women enter the workplace and play an important part in the political and business arenas.

In this part, we aim to investigate how gender affects intercultural organizations, particularly Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Since Japanese and Thai people may have their own cultural values and beliefs towards men and women, it is very interesting to learn how they treat men and women from different cultural backgrounds when they have to work together in the same organization.

Women in Japanese-Thai Joint Ventures in Thailand

Although Japan and Thailand have similar ways of bringing up women in the past, it seems that nowadays, compared to Japanese women, Thai women are more active and accepted in the business organizations. Because of the cultural differences in gender, what would it be like in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand where Japanese male superiors work with Thai female subordinates?

In Japan, after graduation, many female university graduates usually start their job with being an “Office Lady.” “Many women employees are openly called *ochkumi* (tea fetchers), and it is their job to serve tea to other workers and to guests in the office, keep the office tidy, and otherwise fetch and serve for other employees” (Iwao 1993: 202). When they first join the company, they are usually trained to serve tea and to greet visitors appropriately. Moreover, they are expected to keep the office clean and tidy; they are responsible for other office jobs such as making copies at the copy machine. Some women complain that their job description is ambiguous, marginal, temporary, and low-paying. Usually, they do not enjoy lifetime employment and promotions as their male counterparts (Bacaar 1992).

When I worked in a Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand, I was also trained by Japanese managers to serve tea even though we had a company maid. Moreover, unlike my male colleagues, as women, my female colleagues and I had to run small errands and do some clerical jobs such as copying, arranging cars for Japanese managers, and making appointments. Later, my female colleagues and I complained about this to Japanese managers and the personnel department because we believed that we were hired to be sales representatives, not secretaries to the department. After that, the company hired a secretary to take responsibilities of those clerical tasks, instead. As a result, for the case of my previous company, when I interviewed female staff there, they did not complain much about this issue.

When I visited several Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand, I hardly saw any Japanese female expatriates working in Thailand. I once dealt with a female expatriate working as a sales assistant for a Japanese trading company in Thailand. She could speak Thai fluently. Later, I learned that she resigned from the company. However, I did not know what the reasons were.

From the interviews with Japanese male expatriates, I asked them whether there were not many Japanese female expatriates in Thailand and why it was so. Most of the Japanese managers I interviewed avoided answering such a question. Still, two Japanese managers, Mr. Mizumoto and Mr. Watanabe, replied that there were not

many Japanese female expatriates working in Thailand because of the personnel policy of their mother company in Japan.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technical and Quality Control Department, said,

There is no Japanese female expatriate. Because even in my parent company, there are few such secretary-level people who are dispatched in joint venture company abroad. This is attributed to the personnel policy in Japanese managerial system, which is far behind the time.
(Mr. Mizumoto)

Mr. Watanabe, a vice president and general manager of a Japanese trading company, answered my question regarding Japanese female expatriates overseas.

In the past there was one female expatriate, but she already left. It is a rare case for Japanese women to work in a Japanese company in Thailand. If that lady can speak Thai, she is preferred to work in Thailand. They should be able to speak the local language to be able to work overseas.
(Mr. Watanabe)

It seems that Japanese women are less likely to receive overseas assignments. From Mr. Watanabe's reply, Japanese women should have special skills or abilities such as the local language competency in order to be given overseas assignments.

Comments for Male and Female Subordinates

In order to understand attitudes of Japanese male superiors, those of Thai male and female superiors, and those of Thai subordinates, I asked them to talk about male and female subordinates in their organization. Most of the Japanese male managers described their female subordinates as having some constraints to do the job such as working late in the office and drinking.

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technical and Quality Control Department, said, “I have hesitation whenever I direct over-time work to my female subordinates. On the other hand, I can direct males to more risky work.”

Mr. Mizumoto is reluctant to let his female subordinates to do over-time work because women should not stay in the office late at night. It is dangerous for their well-being to go home late at night because their office location is in an industrial area which is far from the city. On the other hand, it is not so dangerous for men to work at the office late at night. Men are also physically stronger to do some difficult tasks such as checking production lines in the plant.

Mr. Kobayashi, a manager of Administrative Department, whose subordinates in Thailand were women, explained, “Because after-hour activities are important, I hesitate to invite my female subordinates out because it is not appropriate. We can talk through daytime business.”

Mr. Kato, a coordination manager, replied that female subordinates might have constraints in working late at night and in going out drinking after working hours. Moreover, he added that some traditional Japanese customers might prefer dealing with male subordinates. He explained,

Women can drink. But, if it is often one on one, it is not appropriate. There should be others going along as well. It is not so good for female staff to go out and drink. Traditionally, in Japan, women should not drink and get drunk. However, there are exceptions. There are not many female graduates in engineering or working in industrial factories. I am not sure if female staff can work as late as men. Men can tolerate working later than women. Moreover, some traditional customers may not listen to female staff. (Mr. Kato)

From my experience working with Japanese customers, I once encountered a situation in which, Mr. Taichi, a Japanese male customer avoided dealing with me. When we were in the meeting, he did not look at my presentation. When we talked, he tended to pay attention to my Thai male manager, instead. Worse than that, when I

called him to set up an appointment, he refused to answer my call. Finally, I requested for my Thai male manager's assistance to contact this Japanese manager for me. It worked. I had a chance to talk with a Thai female manager working under Mr. Taichi's supervision. She explained that Mr. Taichi was very traditional. Sometimes, he preferred dealing with men.

However, from the interviews, it is interesting to find out that most of the Japanese managers praised women over men. The Japanese said that Thai women were more diligent, smart, reliable, and honest than their male counterparts. They thought that Thai men were lazy and not as responsible as women were. The Japanese also thought that women tended to make earnings and take care of their family because men were lazy. They thought that in Thailand, unlike in Japan where men work and women stayed home, Thai women worked outside and took care of their family financially.

Mr. Ota, a managing director of a manufacturer, praised Thai women. He elucidated,

Thai women are more capable than Thai men. The Japanese company in Thailand realizes the capability of Thai women over their male counterparts, so the company assigns women a better job. I even trust my female subordinates to pay a high amount of check. (Mr. Ota)

From the interviews, it seems that men are less enthusiastic to work although they have higher expectation to be in higher positions. They said that it is difficult for non-Japanese in Japanese-Thai joint ventures to climb up the corporate ladders where there are Japanese expatriates in managerial positions. Thus, men become less enthusiastic in doing job. Meanwhile, Thai women are likely to have less ambition to get to higher positions since they might plan to get married and let their husband take care of them. Or, women may have different and subtle ways to gain more promotions since they believe that they are inferior to their male counterparts in the workplace.

For instance, women try to work harder and show the superiors that they are as capable as their male counterparts.

From the interviews, the comments from Thai managers and subordinates also support the fact that Japanese managers seem to be satisfied with Thai female managers more than with male subordinates.

Preeya, a female manager of Administration Department, working under Mr. Ota, said, "As far as my experience in personnel recruitment is concerned, the Japanese tend to hire women over men, except some positions like engineers. I once proposed a man to be an Accounting Manager, but my Japanese boss refused."

Panudej, a male manager of a Japanese trading company, explained that Japanese superiors seemed to care female subordinates better than their male subordinates. He stated, "My Japanese bosses treat female subordinates better and care for them more than male subordinates. They are concerned and often ask why female subordinates work late at night."

Preeda, a male technical service engineer, also claimed that Japanese manager tended to treat female subordinates better than male subordinates. He said,

Japanese customers have different viewpoints between male and female sales representatives. Men are likely to be scolded and complained about more than women. For instance, I visited a customer with my female colleague and there was a problem. As a man, I was scolded more than my female colleague. (Preeda)

Japanese managers seem to prefer Thai female subordinates to Thai male subordinates due to female subordinates' characteristics of being deferential, loyal, patient, hard-working, and diligent. Such characteristics of Thai women are influenced by Thai cultural values towards women. However, Thai managers and subordinates raised the same issue that women had some constraints to work late at night or to perform certain tasks.

Punrawee, a Thai male manager, talked about advantages and disadvantages of female subordinates. He said that in the past his previous Thai conglomerate company did not hire female employees because of their physical constraints. Women could not drive or travel by themselves to other provinces. His previous company is a big manufacturer producing different types of products, ranging from raw materials such as steel, concrete, to finished products such as automobile parts, and tires. Thus, employees are expected to be stationed in different places throughout Thailand. Recently, the situation has changed; more women are hired to different positions in that Thai conglomerate. Punrawee said, "Having female subordinates is advantageous because they can work more carefully. They are good at detailed jobs. However, women are sometimes too emotional and have some physical constraints."

Woraya, a deputy general manager of a trading company, talked about some constraints of female subordinates. She said,

Women have constraints in working. They are not supposed to stay at work until late at night. Moreover, for the Japanese company, sales representatives need to take customers out and entertain them. However, it is not appropriate for women to entertain customers like that because it is a man's world. (Woraya)

Although Japanese subordinates seem to prefer hiring women to men due to women's contributing characteristics, women still have some constraints doing some certain types of jobs. For instance, it is dangerous for women to work and go home late at night. Usually, the Japanese take customers out and entertain them after work hours. However, it is not appropriate for women to take care of customers and entertain them at night. Moreover, some Japanese business people still prefer dealing with male subordinates.

Women and Career Advancement from Japanese Perspectives

In Thailand, women do not have a problem making progress in the business organizations. In several business firms, women are successful in their career as business executives and company owners. As I went to a job interview at a big conglomerate in Thailand, one of the interviewers was a woman. She was in a managerial position. Punrawee, a Thai male manager, also supported that there were a lot of female managers nowadays in Thailand. He was from the same conglomerate I just mentioned. Punrawee said, "Gender is not a barrier to career advancement. There are a lot of women in high management levels in my previous company such as Deputy Managing Director."

Moreover, out of six Thai managers I interviewed, there were two female managers working for Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Thus, it is possible and acceptable for Thai women to get promotions to managerial positions. On the contrary, women in Japan seemed to have fewer chances to gain such benefits to be in management level. When it comes to the situation of Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand where it is common to hire women and promote them to managerial positions, how would Japanese male expatriates feel or react to such a situation?

From the interviews with Japanese male expatriates in Thailand, most of them admitted that in Japan gender could be a barrier in career advancement for Japanese women because they were supposed to stay home being a housewife, and take care of the household and children. However, the Japanese managers did not consider gender as a barrier in career advancement for Thai women. They said that they saw a lot of women in managerial positions in Thailand.

Three out of ten Japanese managers said that gender could be a barrier to career advancement, but it was not a problem in Thailand. They explained that, unlike Japanese women, Thai women had family support and a maid to take care of the household and their families so that they could work outside. Six Japanese managers answered that gender was not a problem in career advancement. Nonetheless, the

Japanese managers mentioned that women still had physical constraints in performing some tasks. The detailed answers from the Japanese managers are discussed below.

Mr. Nishii, a vice president of a Japanese trading firm in Thailand, said that performance was a more important factor for women to get promotions in the company. He explained, "There is no barrier in career advancement for women. Their promotion depends on their will and characteristics. Women can advance in the company. Characteristics are more important."

Mr. Mizumoto, a manager of Technical and Quality Control Department, said, "I do not think that gender is a barrier to career advancement because I know many women being a general manager. They are my customers in Thailand. I think business field is open for women in Southeast Asia, which is different from Japan."

Mr. Uchida, a section manager of a manufacturer, admitted that gender could be a barrier in career advancement. He said, "But, it has become less. The Vice President of my company in Thailand is a lady. Gender seems not to be a serious barrier when we compare to the situation in Japan. Thai women are more diligent than men."

Although most of the Japanese male managers did not consider gender as a barrier in career advancement in Thailand, they still had the image of women being at home taking care of children. They also added that such a trend was now changing in Japanese society as more women began to join business organizations.

To start with, Mr. Yamamoto, a department manager, described career advancement for women in Japan in general by comparing women working for public organizations with those with private organizations. He said,

In a government-related organization where the salary is not high, it is not hard for women to get promotions. However, in a private company, there are some difficulties for women to get high promotions. For a private company, it is very important for women that if they want to get high promotions, they should work as hard as their male counterparts. So, if women work hard, they can get high

promotions. Now in Japan there is also a labor law to support women. (Mr. Yamamoto)

Mr. Hashiyama, a general manager of a Japanese trading company, accepted that women had fewer chances to make progress in the company since Japan was a male-dominant culture. However, the situation has changed recently. He explained,

In Japan, gender could be a barrier in career advancement. Japan used to be a male-oriented culture. But, it is different here in Southeast Asian country. For Thailand, it also depends on class. In some family, women work harder than men. For lower class, Thai men do not work hard; women tend to support the family. In Japan, on the other hand, men need to work and support the family. But, the trend is changing somehow. More women are working, but still fewer than men. In Thailand, I do not really see any difference. Because I am Japanese, I have my own cultural belief lying behind. It is difficult for women to work as men because sometimes they need to negotiate with male customers in private. But, I do not personally see any differences, incapability, or inferiority of women. However, other Japanese expatriates may bring their attitude and culture from Japan. (Mr. Hashiyama)

Although Mr. Watanabe, a vice president and general manager of a Japanese trading company in Thailand, viewed gender as a barrier for women to advance in the company. Japanese cultural values towards women's roles as housewives are still dominant in Japan. He said,

Basically, I do not think that there is a barrier for females to get career advancement. Women should not have a problem getting a job. However, women may have some limitations such as some physical constraints. Still, they can work. But, women cannot work until late at night. It is an old Japanese tradition about women working outside. They believed that men should go out and work; women should stay home, taking care of children and household and maintain them in a good condition. Now this idea is

changing, but this idea is still valued to a certain extent.
(Mr. Watanabe)

Mr. Kato, a coordination manager, gave very interesting comments about Japanese and Thai women in regards to their career advancement. For his background, Mr. Kato went to high school and did his Bachelor's Degree in the United States. In the eyes of Thai subordinates, he was more open-minded in accepting different opinions and Thai culture when compared to his Japanese colleagues. He did not think that gender was a barrier in career advancement in Thailand. He thought that a lot of Thai women could get promotions. The working environment, namely support from family to take care of children, also contributed to their career accomplishment. On the other hand, in Japan, he said that women did not make good progress in their career because they had to take care of their family by themselves. Mr. Kato explained,

Gender could be a barrier in career advancement. But, in Thailand it does not matter. Women can have important positions. The work environment for female graduates in Thailand is very good and progressive. I think it is because Thai people live with big families, including parents. Grandparents and maids help look after children. In Japan, we do not live in a big family anymore. The working environment is not so good condition for females, especially after they get married or have children. Usually, they quit the job when they get married and tend to become a housewife. So, we have to take care of our own children. There is a difference in a house and living here and in Japan. Moreover, in Japan, there are still old people who do not want to work and talk with women. Being a woman can be a barrier to have career advancement in some industries such as construction where there are old style people. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Ota, a managing director, gave a similar point of view to that of Mr. Kato. Mr. Ota first described expected roles of women in the workplace as "Office Lady," doing clerical tasks. However, he admitted that in Thailand many women were

capable and worked outside because they gained support from their family by taking care of children for them. Mr. Ota explained,

In the history, women should be at home, taking care of the children and elderly to be considered as good ladies. The company anticipates that after female workers get married, they are going to quit the job. So, their salary is not high; the company does not expect too many responsibilities from ladies. Women, therefore, are usually assigned to type, make a copy, support men at work, and so on. However, in my company in Thailand, positions in procurement, accounting, and administration are mainly occupied by ladies. Still, engineer, factory, and marketing people are men. Thai women are more capable than Japanese ladies. In Thailand when women have a baby, they can easily hire a maid to help them. But, it's more difficult to do so in Japan. Therefore, Japanese women are likely to become a housewife. In the past, Japanese women could ask grandparents to help them. However, it is difficult now because they do not stay together. In some cases, if the Japanese women are married to an expatriate, they have to move with their husband overseas. (Mr. Ota)

The above are some perceptions and attitudes of Japanese superiors towards working women in Japan and in Thailand in relation to women's career advancement. Japanese expatriates think that women are capable of doing the job and that there should not be any problem for their career advancement in general. However, some Japanese managers talked about women's status in Japan. In Japan, women are expected to stay at home and take care of the household. Japanese managers in an early generation preferred dealing with male subordinates to female subordinates. Nevertheless, nowadays more Japanese women are joining the workforce.

Discrepancies in Japanese Managers' Viewpoints towards Women

There are some discrepancies between my observations of the Japanese managers and the interviews with them. I realized that my observations somewhat

negated Japanese managers' responses concerning gender and career advancement for women in the workplace. I believe that some Japanese managers still had gender discrimination against working women. The following are some examples showing discrepancies between my observations and the interviews with the Japanese.

When I was working for a Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand, my Japanese superior once told me and my female colleagues that it was possible for us to encounter gender discrimination from some traditional Japanese expatriates because they thought that women was supposed to be at home and take care of the family instead of working outside.

From my own experience, I also encountered a Japanese client who seemed to practice gender discrimination against women in the workplace. One day I attended a meeting in which I was the only woman to introduce the company and its products to my Japanese client. However, when I was presenting the information, the Japanese client did not pay attention to my presentation. He did not even look at me or talk to me. I felt uncomfortable since I was responsible for that account. After the meeting, my boss asked me to make an appointment with the Japanese client. I called the customer, but he did not take my calls. Finally, I asked my Thai male manager to make an appointment with the customer for me. He succeeded in setting up an appointment. I later learned from a female subordinate of the Japanese client that he preferred working with male subordinates. He thought that women should stay at home and take care of the household.

Moreover, from my experience and experience of the female participants, we were taught to serve tea, run errands, greet customers, and do administrative duties while our male colleagues were not trained to do such jobs. Male subordinates, however, were assigned to do marketing and sales work.

Apart from the above situations, during the interviews with Japanese managers, I also noticed that even though most of the Japanese managers said that gender was not a problem in career advancement for working women in Thailand, the Japanese mentioned that women still had some constraints in doing certain

assignments. It is possible that the Japanese did not express their real opinions and that they might bring with them their cultural values towards working women.

The Japanese managers' rationalization of physical characteristics of women as a constraint in performing certain duties can convey gender discrimination of the Japanese towards working women. For instance, Mr. Kato a coordination manager said that women might not be able to work as late as men could. However, from the interviews, the Japanese managers did not elaborate details of physical constraints which they thought women had.

I think it is possible that Japanese managers brought with them ethnocentric viewpoints of women as physically different and other cultural values towards women at work because in Japan men are more active in the workplace while women's place is home. The Japanese gender ideologies towards women also come from the ways women are perceived. Japanese managers think that women do not have long-term commitment to the company because women's career will eventually be interrupted for a long child-raising time. In addition, Japanese managers have certain viewpoints of Japanese men and women. According to Japanese managers, Japanese women have physical and mental characteristics as do their male counterparts, which makes certain work seem appropriate to each gender. For instance, women do detailed work better than men. Moreover, women do not have vision as men do. These are some of the Japanese perceptions of women and their gender ideologies which Japanese managers bring with them from Japan. These perceptions and gender ideologies of the Japanese managers can lead to gender discrimination against Thai working women in Japanese-Thai joint ventures.

When the Japanese work in Thailand, they may apply their existing ethnocentric viewpoints of Japanese women to Thai women. For instance, some Japanese managers mentioned that women had certain constraints in performing some jobs. Furthermore, female subordinates were trained to do some administrative duties whereas their male colleagues were responsible for non-administrative jobs and were likely to gain higher promotions. Therefore, although Japanese managers did not

directly admit that gender was a possible barrier in career advancement for women, they still held certain ethnocentric viewpoints towards women and used some physical constraints to rationalize why women could not do certain jobs as their male counterparts.

Gender and Career Advancement from Thai Managers' Perspectives

From the interviews with Thai managers, the majority of Thai managers thought that gender could be a barrier for women in career advancement, especially in the Japanese company. Only one male manager thought that gender was not a barrier for career advancement. There are two major reasons which Thai managers believed can cause difficulties for career advancement for women: external or societal causes and internalized norms. Perspectives from Thai managers are discussed below according to the two categories.

The first category refers to external or societal causes, including male-dominated career, and danger to stay in the office late or go home late at night. Thai managers said that it was not safe for women to work late at the office and entertain customers until late at night.

The second category refers to internalized norms, including personal attitudes towards working women, some physical constraints, stereotypes of women as being too emotional or incapable of being a leader, and cultural values. Thai managers claimed that women did not get the same assignments, career opportunities, or promotions as their male colleagues. Moreover, some male managers said that women were expected to become a housewife after they got married. Some of the Thai managers' comments are as follows.

Two male managers, Panudej and Korkiat, stated that gender could be a barrier in career advancement because women had some constraints in performing some tasks as their male counterparts. Moreover, Korkiat added that it might also be because of

some Japanese cultural values towards women at work. Panudej cited some external or societal reasons which can be a barrier in women's career advancement.

Gender is a barrier to career advancement. Comparing female and male sales representatives, men could advance faster. Women have constraints since they cannot stay in the office until late at night. Or, women cannot go to the plant or negotiate with clients in private. Women also have to get married and become pregnant. (Panudej)

Korkiat was an assistant manager for a Japanese-Thai manufacturer. I worked with him before. We joined the company at about the same time. The company was more male-dominated because of the nature of its business as a steel manufacturer. The company seemed to be engineer-oriented; most of the engineers were men. Moreover, most of the employees in several departments other than personnel and administrative departments were men. He commented about the situation of women and their career advancement, especially in his company.

Gender is a barrier to career advancement. Women are not accepted at work as their male counterparts are. Women have fewer chances to become managers in my company. It may come from Japanese culture that women have to become a housewife after they get married. I think that 99% of men tend to get more promotions, especially in the industrial sector. (Korkiat)

Preeya, a female administrative manager of a Japanese manufacturer in Thailand, mentioned that since her company was a manufacturer, engineers were preferred. Most of the engineers were men, so it was likely that men could advance more in her company. She said,

There are a few chances in terms of career advancement in a Japanese company. Since my company is a business about concrete, engineers are more important. The company needs people knowledgeable in engineering. It is

a small organization. This company is engineer-oriented in terms of promotions. (Preeya)

Woraya, a female deputy general manager of a Japanese trading company, thought that women might have difficulties to advance in a Japanese company. Women did not get the same task and promotions as their male colleagues; they also had some constraints which were barriers to their career advancement. However, at the end of her comments, she added that women who worked hard and produced outstanding work could advance in the company.

Gender is a barrier to career advancement in a Japanese company to a certain extent because they get different job assignments from their male counterparts, leading to different salary. Usually, women work in the office while men need to go out, so men earn higher salary. There are also some constraints for women. For example, it is not appropriate and easy for women to go to the site (factory), to entertain male customers and to work late at night. In some departments, although women work really hard, they do not get promotion as they deserve. Still, if that woman is very outstanding, it's possible for her to get higher promotion. Now job opportunities are open more for women. (Woraya)

Gender Discrimination in Thai Society

In Thailand, it seems that gender in general is not a barrier in career advancement for Thai women because a lot of Thai women work in managerial positions. However, gender discrimination still exists in Thai society. The form and the level of discrimination against working women in Thai society differ from those in other cultures, including in Japanese culture. For instance, in Thai society, gender discrimination is usually practiced by the individuals rather than by companies. Thus, women can still advance to managerial positions and gain promotions in companies.

In addition, the comments from Thai male managers can reflect gender discrimination in Thai society. Thai male managers still thought that women had some constraints in performing certain duties. For instance, Panudej, a Thai male manager, said that women could not work in the office until late at night. He also added that it was not appropriate for women to meet with customers in private to discuss businesses. Both Thai male managers, Panudej and Korkiat, pointed out that women's careers could be interrupted by their marriage and child-raising time. Woraya, a Thai female deputy general manager, also raised some constraints women had in doing certain assignments. She said that it was not proper for women to go to the factory, to entertain customers, and to work until late at night.

Another interesting point is that Thai people still have certain viewpoints that certain careers are appropriate for each gender. As Preeya, a Thai female administrative manager explained that her company was engineer-oriented because the nature of her company's business was producing concrete. It was difficult for women to advance in her company because men were preferred to work as engineers. Similarly, when I was working in Japanese-Thai joint venture manufacturer, the majority of engineers was men. They worked in the plant whereas female engineers worked as service engineers who went out to provide services to customers when there was a problem.

From the aforementioned examples, gender discrimination exists both in Thai society and in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. However, Preeya's comments suggest an ironic twist in gender discrimination against Thai working women. Preeya, a female administrative manager, stated that gender was not a problem in her company and that women were more trusted by their Japanese superiors. Preeya said,

Gender is not a problem at my company because women are more trusted. My Japanese boss said that Thai women were more sincere than Thai men. I also feel that Japanese managers trust Thai women more than men. (Preeya)

I think that Thai women were more trusted because of different characteristics between Thai men and women. Thai women are more submissive and diligent while Thai men tend to be more aggressive. It is possible that Japanese managers thought that submission of Thai women was trustworthy. It is very interesting that although submission of Thai women can lead to Japanese superiors' gender discrimination against them, Thai women's submissive characteristics can make them become trustworthy for Japanese superiors.

Gender and Career Advancement from Thai Subordinates' Perspectives

As I also interviewed Thai male and female subordinates, nine out of 12 Thai subordinates thought that gender could be a barrier for career advancement while only three Thai subordinates did not think so. I found out that the majority of the female subordinates and most of the male subordinates viewed gender as a barrier to career advancement, especially in Japanese-Thai joint venture companies.

From the interviews with female subordinates, women encounter some factors which can be a barrier to their career advancement. First of all, it is a cultural value that women should be home early. It is dangerous for them to be outside until late at night. Most of the female subordinates think that they do not gain equal career opportunity like their male counterparts do because, for example, they are not allowed to stay in the office late at night to do a job. Thus, they did not get the same jobs as their male colleagues. Secondly, women tend to have some physical and emotional constraints which obstacle them to perform some tasks. It is difficult for female subordinates to travel to other provinces and stay over night by herself if they are sales representatives. Another reason is that people still have an image of women as being a housewife, taking care of children. Therefore, people may not see women as capable of working outside.

Some comments from Thai subordinates are categorized into two major reasons: external or societal causes and internalized norms. Detailed explanations of these two categories are discussed above.

The first category refers to external or societal causes. Some comments from Thai subordinates are as follows.

“Gender could possibly be a barrier to career advancement because women may have some constraints such as working late, and traveling to other provinces.”
(Komsun, a male coordinator)

Supranee, a Thai female subordinate who worked as a senior delivery control staff, mentioned both external or societal causes and internalized norms as reasons hindering women to advance in the company.

Gender could be a barrier to career advancement. Men have more advantages at work to advance in the company. A male sales supervisor gets higher promotion than women who have to stay in the office doing sales support work. Women are not allowed to stay late at night. So, they have to leave at 8 p.m. Men can go out and enjoy nightlife together. (Supranee)

The majority of Thai subordinates cited internalized norms as reasons hindering women to gain higher promotions. The following are some of their comments.

“Gender is a barrier to career advancement. The Japanese prefer men to women. For example, women do not get promotion even though they are more senior. But, I do not really see this case in Thai companies.” (Piti, a male senior sales staff)

Gender could be a barrier to career advancement; however, it is not so apparent. The non-Japanese do not get a lot of promotions if they work for a Japanese joint venture because most of the higher positions are for Japanese expatriates. Women may be good for sales job; on the other hand, men are more aggressive. (Chalermchai, a male sales representative)

“Men have more opportunity to progress because women have some physical constraints. Still, women are more detailed and subtle in doing a job.” (Supansa, a female sales assistant)

“Women have some physical and emotional constraints. Women become emotional easily and cannot control their feelings. The Japanese may view that women should be a housewife, instead of working outside.” (Peeraporn, a female sales assistant)

“Gender could be a barrier to career advancement because typical female tend not to be able to avoid using their emotion and personal attitude at work.” (Watana, a male financial officer)

There are fewer chances for women to become sales representatives. If women are in charge of both sales representatives and assistants, it is likely that they will earn the salary of assistants. They can advance slower than their male colleagues. Japanese superiors think that women are not powerful enough to negotiate business with clients. Moreover, some Japanese superiors say that women are still discriminated against at work. (Soraya, a female coordinator)

Noradee, a female sales representative, concluded that whether gender was a barrier to career advancement depended on attitudes of the company and the type of the industry. She commented that although women were good at performing detailed jobs, they did not get the same task or higher promotions as their male colleagues, especially in Japanese companies. She also added that gender was not the only barrier to career advancement. Another barrier, Noradee mentioned about, was that most of the managerial positions were likely to be reserved for Japanese expatriates. Thus, there were fewer chances for Thai employees to get promoted to the managerial positions. She said,

It depends on each company's attitudes and the type of the industry whether gender is a barrier to career advancement.

For instance, for the beauty industry, women can get to higher positions. However, I have never seen any women in higher positions in Japanese companies. The Japanese often think that women will eventually get married and become a housewife and they should not work outside. The job assignment for men and women differs. Women are likely to get a detailed job. For example, I am assigned to take care of customers from automobile industry because there are more details in products sold to customers. I think that women do not usually get promoted to become a manager. At best, they are promoted to be an assistant to manager. Usually, men may face the same problem; it is hard for them to be a manager, too, because most of the management positions are reserved for Japanese expatriates. (Noradee)

Some male subordinates did not view gender as a serious barrier in career advancement. Instead, they thought that it was difficult to get promotions to higher management level in a Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand because most of the managerial positions were occupied by Japanese expatriates. Two of the male subordinates who gave such comments were from the same company. Their comments are as follows.

Suwat, a male sales representative, explained that gender was not a barrier in career advancement. He said,

The same promotion is given to both genders at work. However, it is difficult for Thai staff to get promoted to managerial levels because most of the managerial positions are occupied by Japanese expatriates. (Suwat)

Preeda, a male technical service engineer, also stressed that gender differences did not influence career advancement. Instead, he thought that in Japanese-Thai joint venture, it was likely that managerial positions were reserved for Japanese expatriates. He elucidated,

For my company, the management levels are likely to be for Japanese expatriates. So, gender does not matter. For example, as I have dealt with several Japanese trading companies in Thailand, I have seen that most of their Thai staffs are rather old. Some of them are about 40 to 50 years old. Or, even though they are retired, they still work as sales representatives. Their salary may increase over time. However, they are not promoted to higher positions. In the case of my company, the Japanese have higher ratio in share holding, so it is likely that the management positions are reserved for Japanese expatriates. (Preeda)

Referring to the fact that managerial positions seem to be reserved for or occupied by Japanese expatriates, I think there is a part in the joint venture agreement saying that certain positions and responsibilities should be given as first priority to Japanese expatriates. For example, in my former workplace, Japanese expatriates are assigned to be responsible for managerial positions in Sales and Marketing Department, and Production Planning Department.

Gender Discrimination and Ethnocentric Management

From the interviews with Japanese managers and Thai subordinates, I learned two interesting perspectives concerning career advancement of Thai subordinates. First of all, from the discrepancies between my observations and the responses from Japanese managers, I learned that the Japanese managers had gender discrimination against working women. Although they did not consider gender as a barrier in career advancement for women, they often mentioned that women still had some constraints in performing certain assignments. Second, after the interviews with Thai male subordinates, I also learned that ethnocentric viewpoints concerning Japanese management style existed in Japanese-Thai joint ventures since the Thai male subordinates thought that their career advancement was blocked by the fact that Japanese expatriates occupied most of the managerial positions.

Both gender discrimination and ethnocentric viewpoints existed in Japanese-Thai joint ventures. However, they appeared in different levels or job positions. From the results of my research studies, for job positions below management levels, there seemed to be a glass ceiling for working women to gain higher positions in the company. Gender became a barrier in career advancement for women. Thai male and female subordinates who were below management levels, namely sales representatives, were treated differently in the workplace. While Thai male subordinates were assigned to meet customers, Thai female subordinates were responsible for assisting their male colleagues in their sales jobs, serving tea, and running errands. My research studies show that the majority of Thai female subordinates thought that gender was a barrier in their career advancement. They were not treated as equally as their male colleagues were. Women believed that men had more opportunity to progress in the company because women had some physical and emotional constraints in performing certain jobs. However, they did not give more details concerning constraints which women had.

For the management positions, ethnocentric management policies seemed to be a barrier in career advancement for all of the Thai subordinates regardless of their gender. The ethnocentric viewpoints in Japanese management policies refer to the fact that most of the managerial positions are occupied by or reserved for Japanese expatriates. It is less likely that Thai employees are promoted to be in the management levels. Most of the Thai male subordinates raised their concerns that it was difficult for them to be promoted to managerial positions because most of the management levels were occupied by Japanese expatriates. From my observations, I hardly saw Thai people working in managerial positions, except those Thai female managers who were responsible for non-sales activities. Most of the Thai managers were responsible for Administrative Department, Accounting Department, and Procurement Department.

Therefore, gender discrimination and ethnocentric management policies are two possible barriers in career advancement for Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai

joint ventures in Thailand. To confirm my findings, I think future research should be done to examine whether the aforementioned reasons are barrier in career advancement in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. The future research will be discussed in detail in the Conclusions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these are some comments and attitudes of Japanese male managers, Thai male and female managers, and Thai male and female subordinates about gender, female workers, and their career advancement in Japanese-Thai joint venture companies in Thailand. Unlike Japanese women, in Thailand, women seem to have more career opportunities. It is possible that Japanese male expatriates may have negative or constrained cultural values towards women because they have grown up in Japanese society where men work outside to support family and women stay at home, taking care of the household and children.

When the Japanese expatriates move to work in Thailand where roles of women have changed as they have become more active in business organizations and gained important managerial positions, the Japanese superiors need to learn to deal with women working as their managerial or responsible subordinates. Most of the Japanese superiors accepted that gender was a barrier in career advancement in Japan. However, they said that as they worked in Thailand, gender was not a barrier in career advancement for women. They saw a lot of women in managerial positions. Furthermore, some of the Japanese expatriates seemed to prefer female subordinates to male subordinates as they claimed that women worked harder.

However, most of the Thai managers and subordinates did not agree with the Japanese expatriates. The Thais explained that gender was one of the barriers in career advancement in Japanese companies because Japanese managers still held their cultural values against women that they were not supposed to work outside.

From the interviews, a lot of Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates pointed out that women tended to have some constraints which might affect their career advancement such as their physical constraints and some cultural values towards women. Such cultural values are that it is not proper for women to stay at the office until late at night or arrive home late at night. Women are not supposed to drink; thus, it is difficult for women to entertain male customers at night. Some companies even establish a policy, saying that women are now allowed to be in the office at a certain time at night. Therefore, women may not get the same assignments as their male colleagues.

One of the interesting points raised by some Thai subordinates is that gender is not a serious factor in career advancement. However, they claimed that it was difficult for them to get promoted to higher positions because most of the managerial positions were reserved for Japanese expatriates. I noticed that most of the subordinates who commented so were men. I think that as they do not have to worry about being men, they are more concerned about other obstacles to their career advancement while women may still have to struggle with their gender as one of the obstacles to career advancement.

CHAPTER 10: CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Cross-cultural adaptation is an important issue in the study of international and multinational organizations as it is a critical process for people from different cultural backgrounds trying to adjust to each other and to become competent in communicating, living, and working together effectively. There are several definitions of cross-cultural adaptations for sojourners or expatriates, and people from the host culture. In some literature, the term, sojourner adjustment, is used as synonymous to other terms such as cross-cultural adjustment, cultural or ethnic assimilation, and cultural adaptation. However, some scholars consider sojourner adjustment to be different from cross-cultural adaptation because of differences in purpose, level, and time of the adjustment.

Cross-cultural adaptation often refers to a long-term process of adaptation of people from their own culture to a new culture; they do not return to their home culture. Their motives for moving from their home country are usually economic, political, and social problems in their country. Those groups of people often include refugees and immigrants.

On the other hand, sojourners usually refer to different groups of people such as businesspeople, diplomats, exchange students, and foreign workers. According to Jeffrey C. Ady (1995: 93), "sojourner adjustment is a relatively short-term, individually and time-based process that is conceptually distinct from cultural or ethnic assimilation, adaptation, and intercultural communicative competence." On the other hand, Young Yun Kim (1995) includes sojourners in the cross-cultural adaptation process. The term, cross-cultural adaptation, is used for all the categories of immigrants, refugees, and sojourners. However, sojourner adjustment refers to a "short-term adaptation of temporary sojourners" while cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants and refugees is considered as a "long-term adaptation of immigrants" (Kim 1995: 171). In Kim's present theory about cross-cultural adaptation, individuals,

including sojourners, are considered as “strangers” or “cultural ‘outsiders’” going through adaptation processes to become “cultural ‘insiders’” over a period of time (1995).

In this research, the terms, sojourner adjustment and “short-term adaptation of temporary sojourners, are used interchangeably as they both refer to a process in which sojourners and the host try to adjust so as to be competent in communicating and working together in a host country over time. In this research, the studies of cross-cultural adaptations of the two groups – Japanese managers and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand – are mainly explored. Several cases and analyses of problems and coping mechanisms are presented so that we can learn how they adjust, and thus, communicate with each other in cross-cultural organizational contexts.

Methodology

Methods to study cross-cultural adaptation of sojourners are based on five conceptual definitions of sojourners’ adaptation – general satisfaction, interaction, psychopathology, adjustment to change, and competence. Some examples of these methods are discussed below.

Ruben and Kealey (1979) used open-ended questions to probe about general satisfaction with various aspects of life such as levels of comfort, acceptance, work, and self. Schram and Lauver (1988) employed Social Contact Scale (out-of-class contact time) to measure sojourner adjustment in terms of interaction. Self-report ratings are widely used to measure several aspects of cross-cultural adaptation such as the five-point bipolar self-report scales measuring anxiety, boredom, depression, frustration, helplessness, isolation, and loneliness (Armes and Ward 1989). Intercultural Stress Management is the ability to deal with frustration, stress, political systems, and anxiety, and perceived effectiveness (Stening and Hammer 1992).

The above are some methods used to examine levels of cross-cultural adaptation of sojourners based on different concepts. Ady (1995) concludes that some universal measures of satisfaction, happiness, and well-being may not adequately assess sojourner adjustment because of time and environmental factors. Moreover, it is difficult to measure levels of emotional feelings of individuals because they are unstable, dynamic and complicated. Thus, he suggests that domain-specific measures should be utilized to measure sojourner adjustment.

Therefore, each method has its own advantages and disadvantages in measuring success or failure in cross-cultural adaptation. We may consider employing several methods in the studies and domain specific measures such as adjustment at work, and interaction with the host population to produce more valid outcomes.

Research Questions and Analysis

In this chapter, three cases which occurred at a Japanese-Thai joint venture called NET are analyzed to examine the company's corporate culture. Since the focus of this chapter is on three cases which happened in the Marketing Division of the company in which the majority of the management is Japanese, the overall corporate culture of the Marketing Division is mainly influenced by Japanese business practices. However, the majority of the employees are Thais. Thus, the company's corporate culture is constantly encountered by Thai cultural values.

This chapter also explores how Japanese managers and Thai subordinates try to balance their needs and wishes to be in their own culture with needs and wishes to be more part of the other culture. Although Japanese expatriates are sojourners in Japanese-Thai joint ventures where they work under the foreign culture, they are at home since the corporate culture is mainly influenced by Japanese cultural values. In this situation, the Thais also become sojourners in the workplace because they work under Japanese corporate culture.

Background

From the participant observations and interviews with Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates working for Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand, there are numerous cases showing success and failure in cultural adaptations of the Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates. Innumerable factors and variables affect the individuals' abilities in cross-cultural adaptations such as overseas work experience, including the opportunity to deal with people of different cultural backgrounds, individuals' personalities and attitudes, cultural awareness and sensitivity, and language competence.

The three cases discussed in this chapter are some examples illustrating work experience and cross-cultural adaptation processes of Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates working at NET, a Japanese-Thai joint venture steel manufacturer in Thailand. There are several Japanese, Korean, and Thai shareholders in the company. The major two shareholders are CSN and GCS. They both are large conglomerate companies in Japan and Thailand respectively. The sales office is located in Bangkok while the plant and other departments are in an industrial park in Rayong province. All of the Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates in the following cases are from the Marketing Division of the same company. Most of the Japanese expatriates are from CSN whereas GCS takes care of recruiting Thai personnel for the company. Moreover, CSN takes care of production, marketing, and technology for the company whereas GCS takes care of the remaining departments such as departments of procurement, personnel, and administration.

Each case presents two individuals' work experience and adaptability in the intercultural work settings. Some comparisons and contrasts are further elucidated in the subsequent analysis section.

Case I

The first case illustrates two Japanese managers, Mr. Kato and Mr. Kondo, and how they adjusted to their intercultural work settings. Mr. Kondo's position was the sales department manager while Mr. Kato's position was the coordination manager. Mr. Kondo worked at NET, a joint venture steel manufacturer in Thailand, since the time it was first established while Mr. Kato joined the company a few years later. They had different characteristics and ways to deal and work with their Thai colleagues and subordinates. They both were friendly; however, Mr. Kondo was rather aggressive and strict in the opinion of the Thai subordinates.

Mr. Kondo

Mr. Kondo was transferred from CSN's Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, to be a sales department manager at NET. He had overseas experience working for CSN's subsidiary in the United States. He was very capable in the sales and marketing of the steel business. At the start-up of the company, there were only three Japanese managers in the Marketing Division, including Mr. Sato, the general manager, Mr. Kondo, the sales department manager, and Mr. Yamamoto, the department manager of Marketing and Customer Service Department. After working hours, Mr. Kondo was very nice, friendly, and talkative. However, he seemed to be a different person when he worked. He became more aggressive, assertive, and strict. He preferred quick actions from his subordinates.

At the beginning, when there were few employees in the company, Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates always went out for lunch together. They shared jokes, stories, culture, and language during the meals. They even had dinner together sometimes. Mr. Kondo was very helpful to new Thai subordinates. He gave them a book published by CSN; it consisted of the company's historical background, products, production process, and its corporate culture as well as Japanese culture.

Mr. Kondo and Mr. Yamamoto gave a lecture about NET, its products as well as production processes, the overall steel market, and its prospective customers. After that, Thai subordinates had to prepare a manual for newcomers.

Mr. Kondo always took the initiative in doing things for the office, namely making a table summarizing each person's responsibilities for each week. He was the one who assigned jobs to Thai subordinates. He always called all staff together for meetings, especially sales representatives. He asked them to report the progress of each customer in detail. He seemed to know everything that was going on in the company. He always shared his opinions in almost every matter. If Thai staff arrived at the office late in the morning, he would send out e-mail to every member in the Marketing Division to warn that person, which often caused embarrassment to him/her.

For sales activities, he was rather aggressive. Every trading company and customer knew Mr. Kondo. All of the sales representatives had to obtain his approval before submitting price quotations to customers. When a trading company requested a price quotation, Mr. Kondo asked a responsible sales representative to do some market research about a particular customer and current market prices and then to present a price to him before submitting it to the trading firm. If the sales representative encountered some difficulties in preparing the price quotation, Mr. Kondo would usually ask him/her in to see what the reason was. Although Mr. Kondo often asked for a reason, he did not usually accept the reasons given. He usually blamed the sales representative for not taking quick actions. Instead of encouraging the responsible person, he usually blamed or scolded him/her in front of other Japanese managers and Thai staff, which often embarrassed and upset the subordinate. Chalermchai, one of his Thai subordinates, shared his experience of being scolded by Mr. Kondo in front of his colleagues in the office. He considered scolding unacceptable, causing loss of face, which is important in Thai culture. He explained,

Mr. Kondo often uses harsh words to blame his subordinates; he scolds them in public. This often causes

loss of face and embarrassment to the subordinates. Mr. Kondo always says, 'Use your brain; you are not a messenger who just gets a message and speaks what they said. We hire you as a Bachelor's Degree employee, not a Vocational Degree employee.' (Chalermchai)

One day after a meeting about an annual sales plan in which all managers attended, Mr. Kondo walked quickly out of the meeting room with his face showing frustration to Praemai, a Thai female subordinate. Suddenly, he threw a sales report on the desk in front of Praemai who was working on her visiting report. She was stunned by his harsh actions. He shouted at her and blamed her for making very low figures for the sales estimates in the annual sales plan. After that, Praemai ran out of the office to the restroom and cried. Mr. Kondo did not console her or say sorry to her. During the situation, all of the Japanese managers and most of the Thai staff members were present. The Thai staff criticized Mr. Kondo's actions as too harsh and unacceptable.

Furthermore, Mr. Kondo often monitored all of the Thai staff members' activities and performance closely. He also asked a Thai manager to help him monitor such activities because he could not understand all of the conversations in the Thai language. When he saw a Thai staff member working in front of the computer for a long time, he would walk to that person and ask what he/ she was doing. Or, he would call that person and give him/ her a new assignment. To the Thai staff, they felt that Mr. Kondo did not trust them and often spied on them; they felt uncomfortable about that. Because of this, they often gossiped about him and showed some resistance. For example, some Thai staff refused to join any after-hour activities initiated by Mr. Kondo. Moreover, when Mr. Kondo asked some Thai staff to share their opinions and feelings about the company and the members in the Marketing Division, most of the Thai subordinates tried not to answer his questions or simply said that everything was just fine.

Last of all, many Thai subordinates, including Thai managers, often criticized that Mr. Kondo for not being a sincere person. To Thai subordinates, Mr. Kondo

sometimes gave compliments when they achieved company's goals. The next day, however, it was common to see him scolding them. He often reported all the situations going on in the company to Mr. Sato, the general manager. Thus, Thai staff members felt that they did not know Mr. Kondo's real intentions when he gave them compliments. They also felt that Mr. Kondo was not supportive of his Thai subordinates. However, Mr. Kondo sometimes initiated casual conversations with certain sales representatives during the trip to visit customers, which helped create personal bonding between him and his subordinates. Nevertheless, this situation was not common and hardly happened. As a result, he was often seen as aggressive and not approachable for Thai subordinates.

As I talked to many Thai subordinates, even though a lot of Thai subordinates resigned from the company and complained about him because they felt uncomfortable working under Mr. Kondo's supervision, he did not change his attitudes and actions. However, he eventually returned to Japan because of a severe sickness.

Analysis

Even though Mr. Kondo had overseas work experience, he could not gain trust and acceptance from his Thai subordinates because of his use of harsh words and actions. It is common for Japanese superiors to scold their subordinates in order to teach and mentor them at work. However, in Thai culture, scolding in public is not acceptable and causes loss of face and embarrassment for people being scolded. Both parties, Mr. Kondo and Thai subordinates, did not understand the function of teaching and learning in both cultures. Mr. Kondo believed that scolding was effective in teaching and encouraging subordinates to learn and to work harder. On the other hand, Praemai, the Thai subordinate, considered scolding as blaming, which causes loss of face and embarrassment in Thai culture. Mr. Kondo should have talked with Praemai in private and taught her, instead of scolding her in public.

Another point is that it seems that Mr. Kondo gave priority to getting a job done over establishing good relationships with his Thai subordinates. He might think that good personal relationships should follow job accomplishments. Although Mr. Kondo tried to establish good relationships with his Thai subordinates by initiating some casual conversations, he did not act in the same friendly way when he was in the office. Instead, he showed that he did not trust his subordinates and that he closely monitored their activities and performance at work.

Mr. Kato

Mr. Kato joined NET a few years after Mr. Kondo. He was also from CSN's Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. He studied and obtained a Master's Degree in the United States. Unlike other traditional Japanese managers who seemed to be reserved and quiet, Mr. Kato was an easy-going, talkative, and very friendly person. He was famous and approachable among Thai subordinates. When Thai subordinates had some problems, they were not hesitant to consult with Mr. Kato because he was open-minded and helpful even though it was beyond his responsibilities. He never scolded Thai subordinates in public. When he had some questions, he would talk with the subordinates in private to avoid loss of face of the subordinates. During the interviews, Mr. Kato mentioned that scolding was part of cultural differences between the Japanese and the Thais. He elucidated,

Thai people do not like to be scolded. But, for the Japanese, if scolding is not so hard, it is okay. Scolding is common in Japan. It is used to supervise subordinates, but people should not scold a person too much in front of others. Japanese people usually scold their subordinates in front of others. In my cases, when I scold my staff, I need to make sure that I do not scold too loud and that others do not overhear it. If the subordinates are called into the room to talk, it is going to be a serious problem. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Kato always worked in the office until late at night after working hours because, as the coordination manager, he had to do a lot of different tasks such as estimating raw materials for production planning, and following up on order status. It was common to see him working until the next morning. If he worked at the office until the next morning, he would return home for a few hours and then come back to work again before noon.

Under Mr. Kato's supervision, there were two Thai subordinates; one of them was a male subordinate, called Komsun, and the other one was a female called, Karnchana. Mr. Kato considered after-hour activities and informal conversations important to establish and enhance relationships with Thai subordinates. He often had dinner with his subordinates so that they could exchange some opinions and help solve some problems at work. After-hour activities were also important; however, he had to make an appointment with his subordinates in advance. He explained,

After-hour activities like drinking are good to strengthen relationships between superiors and subordinates. However, Thai people do not drink or smoke a lot. I also need to tell them in advance if I want to invite them for some drinks. (Mr. Kato)

When I asked if his female subordinate joined the drinking party, he answered that she joined the party sometimes. However, it was not appropriate for women to drink much. Moreover, it was not proper if he went out for drinking with only his female subordinate and himself. There should be other staff members joining them. He also added that in Japan it was not appropriate for female staff to go out and drink. Traditionally, in Japan, women should not drink or get drunk.

During the party or dinner, Mr. Kato said that it was a good opportunity to learn about each other and exchange opinions, which could help reduce conflicts and misunderstandings at the workplace. He cited some examples of unpleasant situations going on in the office. He thought that some problems came from the fact that the

Japanese superiors and the Thai subordinates did not have enough direct or open communication to learn about each other.

We (the Japanese managers) are very busy. So, we try to minimize conversations. We try to use informal discussion to share opinions if Thai staff are happy or not at work. However, it does not work sometimes because some Thai staff members do not really express their opinions. They just simply say that everything is okay. (Mr. Kato)

When asked about his supervision styles, he stated that establishing healthy personal relationships or individual-to-individual relationships first at work were significant. He tried to learn more about his Thai subordinates' characteristics so that he would be able to work with them or motivate them to work effectively.

I just want my staff to feel positive working with me. So, it is going to be easier for me to ask them to do the job. That is why good personal relationship or individual-to-individual relationship at work is very important from the beginning. I also try to learn my staff's working styles so that we could work together effectively. (Mr. Kato)

To solve such conflicts and misunderstandings at work, Mr. Kato suggested that the Japanese and the Thais should try to make both working styles cooperate to meet all the staff members' needs at the workplace. He elucidated,

The Japanese might force the Japanese style too much in the workplace. But, forcing either Thai or Japanese style 100 % is not a good idea. We should blend both styles. However, some Japanese styles may be good for Japanese customers. So, there are two issues here: the working style in the office, and how to deal with Japanese and Thai customers. We need to find some appropriate ways to make the two cultures cooperate so that we can work together and with all of our customers effectively. (Mr. Kato)

Another problem Mr. Kato raised during the interviews was punctuality. Thai subordinates were not punctual in submitting assignments. He said that Thai people did not have good time management systems. Thus, to avoid such a problem, he had to indicate very clear deadlines to Thai staff. He said,

For Thai staff, deadlines need to be set clearly. I need to check the progress of the jobs before the deadlines. However, for the Japanese staff, I did not have to do this to everyone. (Mr. Kato)

Mr. Kato is still working for NET; his contract has been renewed and extended.

Analysis

Mr. Kato had overseas education in the United States; he seemed to be able to adjust himself to work with Thai people successfully. This is probably because of his personal traits such as open-mindedness, friendliness, and kindness. He is aware of some problems and misunderstandings between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in the workplace, so he tries to find some solutions by finding an opportunity to exchange opinions with Thai subordinates. He also tries to learn about their working styles and characteristics so that they will learn to work together effectively and blend both Japanese and Thai working styles to suit their needs.

Although scolding is a common method to mentor subordinates, Mr. Kato realizes that it is not appropriate to scold Thai subordinates because scolding subordinates in front of other staff members can cause embarrassment and loss of face. He tries to talk to the subordinates in private if a problem arises. He also makes sure that he never scolds them.

Furthermore, he still continues after-hour activities such as drinking. Although his subordinates often refuse to join him, he tries to find a way to invite them out such

as informing them of the appointment in advance. Or, instead of drinking, he invites his subordinates to have dinner.

Another coping mechanism he utilizes to reduce the problem about Thai staff's punctuality is that he sets up very clear deadlines and monitors the progress of their job assignments step by step to make sure that the subordinates will be able to submit the assignments on time.

As a sojourner working in Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand, Mr. Kondo insisted on his methods and on Japanese ways of dealing with his subordinates. For example, he still scolded subordinates although scolding did not work well in Thailand. On the contrary, Mr. Kato was able to adjust his methods to deal with his Thai subordinates. Mr. Kato did not insist on Japanese ways too much. Instead, he tried to learn about his Thai subordinates and find appropriate ways to deal with them accordingly.

Furthermore, we can see that Mr. Kondo and Mr. Kato try to establish and strengthen relationships with their subordinates. However, their personalities and methods of establishing relationships differed. Mr. Kondo thinks that getting the job done has precedence over establishing personal relationships. On the other hand, Mr. Kato thinks that it is vital to establish individual-to-individual relationships with the subordinates to learn about their working styles and create positive attitudes at work before working together.

Case II

The second case is about Sith and Punrawee, and their adaptability in the cross-cultural work environment. Both of them are Thai managers who had positions of sales department managers in the Marketing Division. Sith has been able to establish good relationships with his Thai superiors and colleagues and gain trust from them. However, he encounters unpleasant work experience with his Japanese superior and colleagues. Punrawee was Sith's successor after Sith's resignation. Punrawee

seems to be able to get along well with the Japanese superiors and colleagues; however, he is not able to gain trust from his Thai subordinates.

Sith

Sith was transferred to a Japanese-Thai steel manufacturer from a joint venture auto-part manufacturer under the same big conglomerate company which owned half of the shares in the Japanese-Thai steel manufacturer. His previous company was also a French, American, and Thai joint venture in Thailand. It was his first time in the steel business. He expected that he would learn about the steel business from his Japanese superiors and colleagues and that he would get a promotion to a higher position.

In NET, his new company, there were two department managers for the Sales Department. Mr. Kondo, the other sales manager, was a Japanese manager from the CSN's Headquarters. CSN was a large conglomerate, famous for its steel manufacturer in Japan. Mr. Kondo had overseas work experience in the United States for couples of years. He was expected to be a mentor for Sith because Mr. Kondo was a knowledgeable person in the steel business. Although Sith had the same job title and responsibilities similar to those of Mr. Kondo, Sith sometimes needed to get Mr. Kondo's approval to offer price quotations to customers and to the trading firms. Sith also worked under Mr. Sato's supervision. Mr. Sato was a Japanese general manager of the Marketing Division. He worked for CSN's subsidiary in Singapore for five years. Sith was directly responsible for market segment A; for this segment, he sometimes had to cooperate with Dumrong, a Thai male sales representative who also had a certain number of customers in market segment A. Moreover, Sith supervised Praemai, a Thai female sales representative, for the other two market segments.

Every Monday morning after the meeting which all of the Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates of all levels had to attend, Mr. Sato, the general manager, would hold another meeting which only managers would attend. Sith was always the only

Thai in the meeting. Almost every time after he came out from the meeting, Sith was frustrated. He did not smile at all. At first, he did not complain about anything. However, as time went by, the company started testing the production line and visiting customers. Sith became even unhappier, especially after he got out of the meeting room. He often told his Thai supervisee, Praemai, that he could not understand Japanese managers at all because they often discussed things in Japanese and they did not interpret anything for him. He felt excluded from the group. Still, he was not discouraged. As a manager, Sith had to visit a lot of customers. He always complained that he felt uncomfortable visiting Japanese customers with Mr. Sato and Mr. Kondo because they always spoke Japanese in the meeting. After each visit, similar to other Thai sales representatives, Sith had to prepare a visiting report detailing the customers' information, and discussions with the customers. After finishing a report, he had to put one copy as a record in the cabinet and circulate the other copy to everyone in the Marketing Division.

Sith could not speak Japanese; he did not think it was necessary to learn Japanese because in the office English was an official language. Nevertheless, all Japanese managers in the sales office hired a Thai teacher to teach them Thai. Mr. Kondo was the one who was most capable in Thai language. He took Thai lessons for several months while other Japanese managers already had given up because of overloaded job assignments. Mr. Kondo often spoke Thai to Thai subordinates.

His company's office hours were from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Sith usually arrived at the office at about 7:00 a.m. or 7:30 a.m. and left the office at about 5:45 p.m. He said,

When I was at my previous company, people left the office right after working hours until 4:30 p.m. But, here in this company, nobody could leave the office as soon as it is 5:00 p.m. The Japanese managers always stay at the office until very late at night. I am not used to this at all. (Sith)

Sith occasionally stayed late in the office when he did not finish assignments. Usually, he was able to finish his assignments before the end of the day. He often complained that Japanese managers always had meetings. He claimed that the meetings were not productive and a waste of time because they never reached any conclusion.

Since Sith usually left the office early, he did not go out to have dinner with Japanese managers. During weekends, some Japanese managers went out and played golf. Sith did not join them, either, because at that time, he did not play golf. During evenings, Japanese managers usually took Japanese customers out and entertained them at pubs and restaurants. Nonetheless, Sith was not invited.

While Sith's relationships with his Japanese superiors and colleagues did not seem to be prospering, he had very good relationships with his Thai subordinates. Sith was well respected among his Thai subordinates. He usually took his subordinates to have dinner and treated them. They often shared jokes and had good times. His subordinates were not afraid to approach him when they had problems. Sith always gave them good and practical advice. Sometimes, he took his son to have dinner with his subordinates. During the meals, Sith and his subordinates usually shared both their pleasant and unpleasant experiences working in the company.

One day in the evening, Sith had a meeting with Mr. Sato, the general manager, to propose a marketing plan and give price quotations to Mr. Sato. He was not certain whether his calculation methods were correct. Thus, Sith also asked Mr. Sato for advice. After he came out from the meeting, he was very frustrated and left for home. The next day, he was still unhappy. He did not talk much or enjoy conversations with his Thai subordinates. He made a lot of phone calls to the Personnel Department and to the managing director of the company who, at that time, was Thai. Then, he had a meeting with Praemai, his only Thai subordinate who was working under his direct supervision. He told her about the meeting with Mr. Sato the day before. Sith said,

I had a meeting with Mr. Sato yesterday to present him a marketing plan for the market segment A. I also showed him the price quotations I prepared. As I was not sure about the calculation methods, I asked Mr. Sato for his suggestion. However, he seemed to ignore me yesterday. He just simply said to me, 'It is not my business.' I was confused and frustrated because he is my boss. He is supposed to give me advice and supervise me for that market segment. I decided to quit; I will show him what his business is. (Sith)

A few days after that meeting with Praemai, Sith submitted a letter of resignation. He told the Thai personnel manager and the Thai managing director some true reasons of his resignation. However, he never told his Japanese superior and colleagues why he resigned from the company. His Japanese superior and colleagues tried to ask those reasons from Praemai. Eventually, Sith was transferred back to his previous company. He has worked there until today and received promotions.

Analysis

This case presents a Thai manager's experience working in Japanese-Thai joint venture in Thailand and his attempts to adjust to the cross-cultural work contexts. The case also underlies the importance of personal relationships other than working relationships at work. Sith is a capable and successful Thai manager; he can achieve a lot of sales volume for the company. Although he can get along very well with his Thai subordinates, he is not willing to establish personal relationships with his Japanese superiors and subordinates. He thinks that getting job assignments done should be enough. As Sith had prior work experience in a different joint venture company in which getting a job done takes precedence over establishing relationships, he might rely on his previous work experience and use it at his new company. Unfortunately, it does not work because he has to work with Japanese superiors and colleagues who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Similar to Thai culture, Japanese people value good relationships and personal bonding. It is important to establish good relationships with people to do business or work with them successfully. It often takes time and a lot of effort for the non-Japanese to show loyalty, sincerity, and commitment to the company to establish trust and good relationships with the Japanese. Yet, Sith did not seem to realize or to show his willingness to enter the group, in this case the circle of trust of the Japanese managers. For instance, his Japanese colleagues invited him out for dinner, but Sith might feel uncomfortable going with them since he was afraid that they might speak only Japanese and that his English language ability was not good enough. Moreover, he did not show his willingness or interest to learn Japanese language and culture while some Thai subordinates who were successful in the company knew how to speak Japanese. Worse than that, since Sith was not accepted into the circle of trust of the Japanese group at that point, Mr. Sato did not care to give any suggestions to him.

Furthermore, since Sith is a manager with good prospects, he may have certain expectations to gain promotions in his new company. However, as he works for a Japanese company in which higher positions are mostly occupied by Japanese expatriates, it is unlikely that Sith will be promoted to a higher position easily. Thus, it is difficult for him to climb the corporate ladder in that context. This fact may discourage him and other Thai subordinates because they do not see any good prospects to work in the company.

Since Sith and Mr. Sato as well as his Japanese colleagues do not have any good personal bonding, they do not usually really talk about any problems they have. To work with each other successfully, they should find some opportunities to talk and share opinions at work. Nonetheless, Sith seems to be better in talking with his Thai subordinates since they are not afraid to consult with him when a problem arises.

If Sith had established good relationships with his Japanese superiors and colleagues and was more enthusiastic about learning Japanese language and culture, he would be able to work effectively and successfully in the company.

Punrawee

Punrawee, a new Thai manager, was transferred from a manufacturer of construction materials under the same conglomerate company as Sith, to succeed Sith's position as a sales department manager.

After graduating from one of the most respected universities in Thailand, Punrawee joined GCS, a large conglomerate company in Thailand. Then, he got scholarships to further his studies in Japan for two years. Later, he did an internship in Japan after obtaining his Master's Degree. He could speak Japanese. However, he claimed that his Japanese language ability was not fluent because he did not have a chance to practice Japanese at all after he returned to Thailand. It is common for Thai people to show their humble personality by saying that they are not good at doing things even though they are because they do not want to stick out from the group's harmony.

Before he joined the Japanese-Thai joint venture steel manufacturer, Thai subordinates in the company expected that Punrawee would be nice to the Thai staff. At that time, there were some Thai staff who were not satisfied with the Japanese superiors. They thought that the Japanese did not trust them to do the job and that the Japanese always monitored them while they were working. However, the Thai staff did not seem to be happy with Punrawee because he got along with the Japanese superior and colleagues rather well. He sometimes went out with the Japanese superiors to have dinner or do some activities after working hours. Punrawee did not complain about meetings in which all of the Japanese used Japanese despite his presence. Punrawee even helped the Japanese monitor Thai staff's performance and reported it to the Japanese. From the Thai staff members' perspective, Punrawee seemed to take the Japanese side.

Punrawee arrived at the office after 7:30 a.m. He usually worked at the office until late at night. He did not complain about staying late in the office. Instead, he

compared and contrasted how the Japanese and the Thais were concerned about time, and punctuality. He stated,

In Japan, people are always in hurry. Time is essential. Everything needs to be according to schedules like trains. The schedules fall into very detailed minutes such as 27 and 38 minutes. On the other hand, Thai people tend to work in a *Sabai Sabai* (i.e. relaxed) way. (Punrawee)

When Punrawee talked about Thai staff, he usually said that they felt resistance to the Japanese superiors. They were not willing to work according to the Japanese superiors' assignments. For example, they came back to the office late after the lunch break and gossiped about the Japanese superiors. He said,

Thai staff should try to understand the Japanese superiors and work hard to meet their standards. Moreover, they should be punctual and try not to show any resistance to the Japanese. (Punrawee)

When Punrawee was questioned about his Japanese superiors and colleagues, he mentioned that the Japanese sometimes did not share information with him. For example, he did not know that a new Japanese manager from Japan was sent from Japan to succeed Mr. Kondo's position after Mr. Kondo was hospitalized. He thought that the Japanese should share such information with him. Then, when he asked to describe his ideal manager, he answered that he preferred a superior who took good care of his subordinates and fought for their interests, namely for higher promotions. He also added that the superior should share some information with his subordinates, including the future plan of the company as well as the future of the employees. Some Thai staff told me that Punrawee expected that he would be promoted to succeed Mr. Kondo's position and take care of his market segments. Thus, he was upset that he did not get any promotion.

Information is sometimes not shared among people in the office. For instance, I did not know that there would be a Japanese manager coming from Japan to succeed Mr. Kondo's position. Nobody informed me of such information. (Punrawee)

Unlike Sith, Punrawee did not complain much about Japanese managers speaking Japanese during the management meetings and staying late in the office. However, after Punrawee's experience of being excluded from the Japanese managers' group and of not being informed of the new Japanese manager, he became more critical of the Japanese. During the interviews, he expressed his opinions about the two incidents.

It is sometimes hard for me to be one of the group members because I had a language problem. (He referred to the group members of the managers in which the Japanese are the majority.) I could not understand when they spoke Japanese in the meeting. Moreover, I need to stay in the office until late at night to show my spirit at work because my colleagues were still working. (Punrawee)

During the interviews, Punrawee often complained that Thai staff did not dare to approach him for advice. Later, when I got a chance to talk to Thai subordinates, they explained that they did not want to tell anything to Punrawee because he often told the Japanese their secrets. In addition, Punrawee thought that personal relationships with his subordinates should come after working relationships. He explained, "Relationships with my subordinates should be based on work first. If they can work and satisfy my objectives, personal relationships will follow."

Punrawee is still working at NET. However, he has not yet succeeded in gaining trust and in cultivating good personal bonding with his Thai subordinates.

Analysis

If we consider both cases of Sith and Punrawee, we can see some similarities and differences in their work experience at the same company. First of all, unlike Sith, Punrawee had overseas work experience as an intern in Japan, so he knows Japanese language and culture. It is less difficult for Punrawee to work with the Japanese and to gain acceptance into the circle of trust of the Japanese managers. He knows that it is common for the Japanese to stay at the office late at night to finish their assignments. Thus, he shows his willingness to stay at the office until late at night. Moreover, he is willing to join the Japanese after working hours to have dinner or to entertain themselves at a karaoke pub.

While Sith tends to establish good relationships with Thai staff by finding an opportunity to talk with the subordinates and enjoy after-hour activities such dinner with the Thai subordinates, Punrawee believes that personal relationships with Thai staff will naturally follow work relationships with extra effort. Sith is trusted among Thai subordinates while Thai staff think that Punrawee takes the Japanese side and that he cannot be trusted. Punrawee does not complain much about his situation or the Japanese superiors and colleagues at work whereas Sith sometimes talks with his subordinates about his situation and the Japanese.

However, both of them encounter the same situations. For instance, they need to attend meetings in which they were the only Thai and the Japanese mainly use Japanese in the discussion. Furthermore, they think that some information is not shared between the Japanese and the Thais. Although Punrawee seems to be able to gain acceptance into the Japanese group to some extent, he experienced the same incidents as Sith did. It is probably because it might take more time and effort to gain trust and acceptance into the Japanese group.

Another similarity is that they think that there are not many opportunities for them to get promoted to higher positions because most of the higher positions are already occupied by the Japanese expatriates. In addition, although they both hold

managerial positions, they do not seem to have real authority to make many decisions while their Japanese colleagues seem to have more authority. For example, they both need to consult with Mr. Kondo before offering price quotations to customers. They need to report every activity to Mr. Kondo even though Sith and Punrawee are in the same position as Mr. Kondo. This might be because Mr. Kondo is more knowledgeable in terms of the steel business. Mr. Kondo is also from the CSN's Headquarters which is responsible for sales activities for the company. It is common in Japanese companies that managers in the middle level have more authority over everyday matters than general managers or those in certain higher positions.

Therefore, the cases of Sith and Purawee illustrate two sojourners in Japanese-Thai joint venture in which the corporate culture is mainly influenced by Japanese business practices. Although Punrawee seemed to be able to adjust to the work environment, he was still not fully accepted into the Japanese circle of trust. Meanwhile, Sith did not seem to try to show commitment to the Japanese group to gain trust and acceptance. Nonetheless, Sith was able to gain trust and loyalty from his Thai subordinates.

Case III

During the first few years, the company had not started production yet. There were not many employees in the Marketing Division. Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates usually had lunch or dinner together. They had good times and shared jokes. Apart from being given lectures about the steel manufacturing process and steel markets, Praemai and Noradee, female sales representatives, were taught to prepare and serve tea as well as to greet customers. Although they were titled as sales representatives, as women, they were also responsible for administrative matters such as paying utility bills, reimbursing expenses for executives, and running errands for the sales office while their male colleagues did not have to learn to do so. Unlike the

practices in Thai companies, it is common for women in Japanese companies to be responsible for serving tea, doing administrative work, and running small errands.

About six months later, the company recruited more employees to the Marketing Division and began to test the production lines. People became busy and did not have free time to talk or share jokes, especially between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, which resulted in distances forming in relationships between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates. Consequently, when some misunderstandings arose, they did not have a chance to talk to each other or try to solve the problems together. Then, the problems began to accumulate. Some Thai staff members started to gossip about the Japanese superiors and those who were favored by the Japanese; those staff members also showed resistance to Japanese superiors. For instance, some subordinates did not arrive at the office or submit their assignments on time. Furthermore, they refused to join any after-hour activities with the Japanese superiors. However, they usually had a party with the Thai staff and did not invite the Japanese.

Praemai and Noradee are some good examples of two female subordinates working as sales representative for the Marketing Division of NET. From their experience, we will learn that cultural awareness and willingness to adapt oneself to the cross-cultural work settings are important factors to succeed in cross-cultural adaptation.

Praemai

Praemai was working under the supervision of Mr. Kondo and Sith. She was responsible for market segments in which the majority of the customers were Thai. She had to report to both Mr. Kondo and Sith. It was her first time working with the Japanese; she did not speak the Japanese language or have knowledge about Japanese culture. When Mr. Kondo handed her a CSN book, including information about the company, its historical and cultural backgrounds, and Japanese culture in general,

Praemai did not pay attention to it or read it. She believed that with her English language ability, she should be able to work successfully for the Japanese. She arrived at the office late and then left the office right after the working hours while most of her colleagues and superiors were staying until late at night. The above points were some comments of Praemai's evaluation of herself.

At the beginning, since the company had not started real production yet, the job did not seem to be challenging for her. She did not prepare herself well about the steel business and the production of the steel. As a result, she was behind when the company started to sell their products. Mr. Kondo was not happy about this situation. Praemai often felt that she was closely monitored for her performance. One day in the late afternoon, Praemai and some other Thai subordinates were joking and talking about the jobs. Suddenly, Mr. Kondo asked one of the Thai subordinates in that conversation whether they were having quarrels since he thought that they were talking very loud. Praemai and her colleagues were shocked by Mr. Kondo's interpretation and attitudes; they told him that they were just talking.

Later, Sith, her Thai supervisor, revealed that Mr. Kondo did not trust her and that Mr. Kondo asked him to spy on her and listen to her telephone conversations. Sith warned her to act seriously at work because when she talked with the customers over the phone, she always smiled and laughed, which made Mr. Kondo think that she was talking with friends over the phone. Hearing such a fact from Sith, Praemai knew that she was in trouble and that she would never be trusted by her Japanese superior. She eventually tried to adjust by acting more seriously, being more punctual, and working harder. She usually worked late at the office like other staff members. However, it seemed to her that Mr. Kondo did not change his impression of her.

One day, Mr. Kondo came out from the meeting about the annual sales plan, and walked directly towards her with his right hand holding a sales report. When he reached where Praemai was sitting, he threw the report on her desk, shouting at her and blaming her for not making good sales estimates. She was shocked and ran to the restroom crying. After that, she was often scolded in the sales meeting when Mr.

Kondo asked her to report the progress of her sales. She was embarrassed and lost face in front of her Japanese superiors, Thai superiors, and Thai subordinates. However, she did not give up yet. She thought that she would change herself and become more diligent.

Unfortunately, in addition to these unpleasant situations with her Japanese superior, she encountered some unpleasant situations with her Japanese customers. One afternoon she was called to join a meeting because her Japanese customer was visiting the sales office. She was enthusiastic, and prepared herself to present the company's information. While she was in the meeting room, she felt excluded from the group. She was the only woman in the meeting. When she expressed her opinions or presented any information, everybody in the room looked at her, except her Japanese customer. He did not look at her or pay attention to her at all even though Sith, her Thai superior, introduced her to him. When the Japanese customer had some questions, he turned to Sith and asked him, instead of asking her. She felt very bad about that. Later, she was assigned to make an appointment with that Japanese customer. When she called him and tried to set up an appointment, he refused to talk to her. Finally, she had to ask Sith to call him, instead.

After all of the unpleasant situations she encountered, she, eventually, decided to resign from the company. Before she left the company, she decided to talk to Mr. Kondo and asked him about his attitudes towards her. He also tried to ask her for reasons of her resignation. She simply replied that she would like to further her studies. Mr. Kondo also simply said that he saw that Praemai had tried her best to adjust herself and dedicate herself to the job. He added that it always takes time to learn in the company. He added,

Usually, in Japan, newcomers should get some training before they start to do the job. They will be transferred to learn about the job in several departments. We do not have such a policy here in Thailand. It is too soon for you newcomers to start to do the job you are not yet familiar with. It always takes time.

That is what Mr. Kondo told her before she left the company; he never really mentioned the reasons he always scolded her. For Praemai, she really wanted to know the reasons because she took it personally that Mr. Kondo did not like her.

Analysis

It is common for Japanese companies to hire new graduates and train them. In the case of Praemai, she should have paid more attention to the materials given to her. Being lazy at the beginning creates some bad impressions in the eyes of her Japanese superior. Moreover, she does not learn the Japanese language while her female colleagues can speak Japanese. That reason may make her different from the rest of the group; thus, her Japanese superior may think that she does not dedicate herself to the job enough.

In addition, in Thailand, people value “having fun” at work. Thai people try to avoid confrontation and conflict by smiling and talking in an informal way to ease difficult situations at work. It is common to see Thai people chatting, making jokes, and working at the same time. Although Japanese people value relationships and try to avoid confrontation at all cost, they have different ways to do it at work. Thus, Japanese people might not understand the way Thai people work and “have fun” at work. From this point of view, it is not surprising that Mr. Kondo might think that Praemai does not focus on her jobs because she does not act seriously while she is working. To exacerbate the situation, Praemai has a friendly and outgoing personality, which further puzzles Mr. Kondo.

Another point is that some traditional Japanese managers are not familiar with the fact that there are a lot of women working in business organizations. The customer in the above case might not be comfortable with women working as a sales representative. I also had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Sato about women working in the company. Mr. Sato said that some traditional Japanese businesspeople were still

conservative and preferred dealing with men in the workplace. However, Praemai made a right decision to get a job done by asking Sith to contact the customer for her.

Noradee

Noradee joined NET at about the same time as Praemai did. Noradee could speak Japanese moderately well because she took Japanese classes when she was studying in the university. She also continued her Japanese class when she worked. When she was given the CSN book, she carefully studied it. She was working directly under Mr. Kondo's supervision and most of her customers were Japanese.

She always enjoyed making observations when she went out with her Japanese superiors to visit customers. She often came back to the office and told her colleagues about what she learned from the trip to the customers. For instance, she said that Mr. Kondo taught her how to hand a customer a name card and how to receive it appropriately. Another observation was that, in the meeting, the youngest people in the lower positions should talk little and let the senior people make a deal or handle the situation. People in the same position have a right to deal with people in the same position. She explained, "I hardly saw people in the lower position being aggressive, making a deal, or being assertive in the meetings."

Despite her careful observations and efforts, she cited an example of a situation in which she also had to ask her superior to talk with the customer since he did not cooperate with her well. She stated,

When I called a Japanese customer to ask for some information, the customer said that he did not know anything. He refused to give me any information and told me to have my boss call him, instead. Later, I found out that my boss got the information from the customer. It is often necessary to ask for my boss' help to get a certain kind of information. The Japanese customers seemed to cooperate with us better when I asked my boss to call them, instead. (Noradee)

In the company, all of the Japanese superiors, especially Mr. Sato, the general manager, seemed to trust her the most. Mr. Sato often asked her to process some visa issues or personal documents for him. When Mr. Sato's wife visited him, he always asked Noradee to take care of his wife by taking her to a weekend market and to some other places. He also bought some gifts for her. This situation created some gossip among Thai staff members since it seemed to them that Noradee was favored the most by Japanese superiors.

Finally, she resigned from the company to further her studies; she also got a new job. She resigned from the company because she had too many tasks and, thus, did not have time for her studies. Moreover, she thought that there was a glass ceiling in the Japanese company for women and that she was not likely to gain career advancement in the company.

Analysis

If we consider both cases of Praemai and Noradee, we can learn that Noradee was more culturally sensitive than Praemai. Noradee was also more enthusiastic to learn about Japanese language and culture because she often made observations when she had a chance to communicate with Japanese people. She seems to possess the personality necessary for adjusting herself in cross-cultural work settings. When she visits customers, she often makes herself observe to learn how Japanese people work and communicate with each other, and then she applies such knowledge to her everyday life working with the Japanese. On the contrary, Praemai does not take on the role of an adaptive sojourner in the company the corporate culture of which is Japanese soon enough.

Conclusion

Some conclusions can be drawn from these cases illustrating how individuals in different groups such as Japanese managers, Thai managers, and Thai subordinates learn in cross-cultural communication contexts to adjust themselves to work with people from different cultural backgrounds. From the aforementioned cases, we can see how Japanese superiors as sojourners working in Thailand, and Thai superiors and Thai subordinates as sojourners working in Japanese-Thai joint ventures try to balance their needs and wishes to be in their own culture with needs and wishes to be more part of the other culture. The use of power can also be seen. The Japanese expatriates have authority as they are in the management level of the company. Although the Thais are not in power in the company, their culture is the majority. They can also quit from the company, for example.

It is common for people with different cultural backgrounds to encounter some misunderstandings and conflicts when they work together because they might have different values, beliefs, and customs. Therefore, people should be culturally sensitive and aware of some cultural differences so that they will be able to adjust themselves accordingly and work together successfully. There are some factors which may affect people's adaptability in cross-cultural work settings as follows:

First of all, people who have overseas work experience, or experience working with people from different cultural backgrounds tend to be able to adjust themselves well in the cross-cultural organizational environment. For instance, since Purawee was an intern in Japan before, he knew that he should stay at work late.

The second factor includes personal characteristics, attitudes, and cultural sensitivity and awareness. For instance, Noradee is a good example of a person who has a positive attitude, and a personality that learns a new culture and adjusts herself accordingly. Thus, it is vital for people to cultivate an adaptive personality to be able to have competence in cross-cultural communication.

The third factor is language ability. To work in joint venture companies in which a foreign language is spoken for management, it is important for one to be able to communicate with other people. From the above cases, we can see that Sith and Praemai might not be happy working at NET because other Thai staff could understand Japanese language and have fun talking and joking with Japanese superiors while Sith and Praemai were not able to do so. Furthermore, since it is a Japanese-Thai joint venture, English is used as a medium to communicate in the company. If a person cannot use English fluently, it is going to be a problem for that person to work there since he/ she will not be able to communicate with the Japanese superiors and customers. Therefore, language competence is necessary in international and multinational organizations.

The fourth factor relates to cultural aspects, including national culture, existing corporate culture, and cultural backgrounds. It is common to see some misunderstandings and problems when people with different cultural backgrounds work together. Thus, if we are in such a situation, we need to understand people's cultural backgrounds and try to adjust ourselves appropriately.

Another factor is people's willingness to adjust. It is common for people to encounter some misunderstandings and conflicts when they engage in intercultural work settings. They may realize that they need to give up their personhood, and some of their beliefs, and values, at least temporarily. They may learn that what works in their culture may not work in another culture. It is vital for them to recognize such differences and try to understand those new values so that they will be able to adjust themselves successfully in intercultural communication. On the other hand, if people think that their culture or their way of doing things is the best, and they are not willing to change, it is less likely that they will be able to adjust themselves successfully in intercultural work settings.

In conclusion, the above are some factors which may influence people's adaptability to adjust themselves in the intercultural work settings. However, it does not mean that if a person possesses the qualifications above that he/ she will be able to

adjust and fit in the intercultural environment well. They may need to do some observations of their work colleagues and adjust their coping methods accordingly, depending on the situation as well.

Life and humans' behaviors are dynamic; they are not easy to predict. They can also change over time. Thus, there is no concrete pattern for individuals to deal or communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. People need to be flexible, open-minded, optimistic, and culturally sensitive in dealing with diversity at work. I would like to end this part with a meaningful quote regarding cross-cultural communication and the adaptation process by Young Yun Kim, a scholar and researcher of communication and cross-cultural adaptation.

Although the process of becoming intercultural is never complete, each step on this path brings a new formation of life. This accomplishment is not one that only extraordinary people can attain. Rather, it is an instance of the normal human mutability manifesting itself in the work of ordinary people stretching themselves out of the old and familiar. The transformative experiences of intercultural persons around the world bear witness to the remarkable human spirit and capacity for self-renewal beyond the constraints of a single culture. Their struggles, as well as their triumphs, hold out wisdom and promise for us as we walk through our own intercultural journeys. (Kim 2001: 235)

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSIONS

Executive Summary

From the findings, there are four important areas where conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings occur between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates due to different cultural values at work. Towards the end of the descriptions of these findings, three cases are presented to illustrate how Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates try to adjust to intercultural work settings.

1. Concept of work

▲ Characteristics

- ★ Japanese people are industrious and look serious at work.
- ★ Thai people are laid back and have “fun” at work.

▲ Problem solving

- ★ Japanese superiors expect their Thai subordinates to solve problems immediately.
- ★ Due to their inexperience, Thai subordinates usually encounter some difficulties and cannot solve problems at once. The Thais are also reluctant to approach their superiors because Thai subordinates do not want to be considered as incompetent in the eyes of Japanese superiors.

▲ Unclear job descriptions and responsibilities

- ★ In Japan, there is no clear job description. Job rotation is common in Japanese company; subordinates are often assigned to work in different departments to learn new tasks.
- ★ Thai subordinates often feel uncomfortable when they do not know their job responsibility and when their job responsibilities overlap with their work colleagues.

▲ Lifetime employment, commitment to the company, and resignation

★ Japanese employees usually work at the same company until their retirement age. They also have strong commitment to the company.

★ Thai employees are not familiar with the idea of lifetime employment.

It is common for the Thais to find a new job to gain promotions. Another reason for the high turnover rate of the employees in Japanese-Thai joint ventures comes from the fact that Thai employees are not happy working in joint ventures, resulting from cultural differences at work.

2. Vertical relationship

▲ Roles of superiors and subordinates

★ In Japan and Thailand, superior-subordinate relationships are similar to those between fathers and sons, and those between teachers and students.

★ Superiors are supposed to give directions, and protect their subordinates. In return, subordinates are expected to show respect, gratitude, and obedience to their superiors.

▲ Priorities at work

★ Japanese managers believe that pleasant relationships come after job accomplishment while Thai employees focus on building relationships before working together or during work hours.

▲ After-hour activities

★ Activities after official work hours are an alternative to strengthen relationships between Japanese superiors and Thais subordinates.

★ Drinking rituals after work hours are common in Japan. People usually become relaxed and exchange their opinions.

★ Japanese people go out after work hours to enjoy drinking together with their work colleagues while the Thais prefer going home directly to spend time with their family. It is likely that Thai people will have informal gatherings with their colleagues on Fridays.

★ The Japanese and the Thais are reluctant to have after-hour activities because of age differences, commitment to the company, different interests, and language problems.

3. Authority and supervision style

▲ Supervision and learning styles

★ Japanese companies are likely to hire new graduates and prepare them with in-house training programs.

★ Thai companies prefer hiring employees with degrees that relate to their job positions and responsibilities

▲ Scolding

★ In Japanese culture, scolding functions as the way superiors use to teach and mentor their subordinates. After being scolded, Japanese subordinates become guilty and try to improve their performance.

★ Thai subordinates do not understand the function of scolding. Instead, scolding and blaming can cause humiliation to Thai subordinates if scolding and blaming are done in front of other colleagues.

▲ The Japanese wish for the expression of opinions

★ Japanese superiors want their Thai subordinates to express their opinions.

★ Thai employees are reluctant to share their opinions because of several reasons as follows:

★ Language problems

★ Fear of giving wrong answers

★ Thinking that it is the responsibility of the superiors to take actions

★ Reluctance to show any objection against their superiors

▲ Use of Japanese language in meetings and information sharing

★ Thai subordinates often complain that the Japanese usually discuss business in Japanese during meetings. The Thais feel uncomfortable about such a situation.

★ The Thais also complain that the Japanese do not share information with them. We can see that lack of information sharing from the Japanese can reflect a Japanese lack of trust in Thai subordinates.

▲ Authority and the decision making process

★ Japanese and Thai people have different decision making processes. The Japanese tend to involve every party in making a decision while the Thais believe that it is a manager who is responsible for making decisions.

★ Thai subordinates complain that Japanese managers do not give them the authority to make some of the not-so-important decisions namely giving price quotations to customers. Due to their lack of authority, Thai subordinates often lose customers' trust and reliability.

4. Gender

▲ Women in Japanese-Thai joint ventures

★ In Japan, women are less likely to gain higher promotions. Instead, women are given administrative tasks such as copying documents, running small errands, and serving tea.

★ Although Japanese managers think that gender is not necessarily a barrier in career advancement for Thai women because their families can help take care of their children and the household, they still mention that women have some constraints to do certain tasks when compared to men.

★ Thai female subordinates think that gender is a barrier to their career advancement and that they are not given the same tasks as their male counterparts.

- ★ Thai male subordinates do not consider gender as a barrier to career advancement. Instead, they assert that the problem is that the management level is occupied and reserved by the Japanese expatriates.

5. Cross Cultural Adaptation

▲ Factors which may affect people's adaptability in intercultural work settings are as follows.

- ★ Prior overseas experience or former experience working with people from different cultural backgrounds
- ★ Personal characteristics, positive attitudes, and cultural awareness
- ★ Language ability
- ★ Ability and willingness to understand other cultures

Important Contributions to the Literature

Organizational culture refers to shared assumptions and meanings created and contested by organizational members. It is influenced by the wider culture, namely the dominant societal culture as well as ethnic cultures. It also consists of several subcultures such as cultures that differ by level of management, gender, and educational backgrounds. We can study organizational culture by examining interactions between organizational members, customs, artifacts, and cultural values. In intercultural work settings, due to cultural differences, people often create negative perceptions, attitudes, stereotypes or bring in negative myths about other people with different cultural backgrounds. This can result in conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings at work.

From my analysis of cross-cultural adaptation of Japanese managers and Thai subordinates, I would like to extend the definition of sojourners. From the existing literature, sojourners include businesspeople, exchange students, diplomats, and foreign workers who have to stay and work in other countries for a certain period of

time. The sojourner adjustment process is considered a short-term process of cultural assimilation. However, from my study, both Japanese expatriates and Thai subordinates become sojourners in the context of Japanese-Thai joint ventures. Japanese expatriates go to work in Thailand and bring in their Japanese cultural values. They need to adjust to the local cultures at work and in their everyday life. Similarly, Thai employees work in intercultural work settings with Japanese managers whose cultural values and practices differ. Although Thai employees work in their own country, the corporate culture they are immersed in is mainly influenced by Japanese management styles. Thai employees are also supervised by Japanese managers.

The existing literature concerning cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people usually focuses on differences in cultural values, business practices, and management styles as causes of conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. However, my research study includes not only differences in cultural values at work but also considers the adaptability of Japanese managers and Thai subordinates. From the findings, we can see that despite cultural differences at work, some Japanese managers and Thai subordinates are able to adjust themselves to work successfully in intercultural work settings while others fail and resign from the company. Thus, to understand conflicts, frictions, and misunderstandings in intercultural work settings, we should consider not only cultural differences but also people's adaptability, personal traits, cultural awareness, language competency, and prior work experience.

As I explored several documents and research on cross-cultural communication between the Japanese and the Thais, only a few studies focusing on cross-cultural communication between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates existed. Although Piazza (1992) and Thianthai (1989, 1998) explore Japanese management systems in Thailand and superior-subordinate relationships between Japanese managers and Thai subordinates, their research studies mainly stress success and failure of the Japanese management systems and the Thai subordinates' reactions. Their studies only discuss

certain aspects, namely lifetime employment, job promotions, punctuality and a sense of time, decision making processes, and commitment to the company. My research covers not only the aforementioned aspects but also problem solving methods, building and maintaining relationships between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates, supervision styles of the Japanese, and gender issues.

My study shows that conflicts and misunderstandings in Japanese-Thai joint ventures can come from information sharing. Thai subordinates complained that Japanese managers did not share information and used the Japanese language too much in meetings. In addition, I found that Thai female subordinates thought that gender was a barrier in career advancement while their male colleagues did not. Instead, Thai male subordinates thought that their career advancement was blocked because managerial positions were occupied by Japanese expatriates.

Only my study delves into a deeper analysis of gender as a factor in career advancement in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. I also found that the high turnover rate of Thai employees came from the fact that the Thais did not have job satisfaction in Japanese-Thai joint ventures due to cultural differences and inability to adjust to intercultural work settings. Moreover, I found that Thai female subordinates thought that they did not get the same level of assignments as their male colleagues did and that they were less likely to gain higher promotions in Japanese-Thai joint ventures. On the other hand, Thai male subordinates did not consider gender as a barrier to career advancement. Instead, they thought that there was a ceiling for career advancement in Japanese-Thai joint ventures because most of the managerial positions were usually occupied by or reserved for Japanese expatriates.

Another important contribution of my research to the existing literature is the way “collectivism” works in different societies. Although Japan and Thailand are considered “collective” societies, their values of “collectivism” differ. In my research study, “collectivism” refers to the way people in the society value their relationship, their dependence upon others, and their emphasis on teamwork. My research study

shows that Japanese people are more “collective” than Thai people are when it comes to the workplace situations.

In Japan, harmony and solidarity in the working groups are emphasized. Various qualities are necessary to nurture and strengthen working relationships within the working groups; those qualities include cooperation, trust, hard work, morale, and harmony. Work is the center of Japanese people’s life. The interests of the organization as a whole take precedence over the interests of the organizational members. Every organizational member should work hard for the well-being and reputation of the organization. The organization also exists for the benefit of its employees. An example of the Japanese value on “collectivism” is the way decisions are made. As explained in the findings, Japanese people usually involve many people in the decision-making process to ensure that everybody know about the projects and to minimize possible errors in making decisions.

On the contrary, family is the center of Thai people’s life. Work comes after family; work is necessary because people can earn money to support themselves and their family. The workplace is where people gain social needs, namely trust, credibility, reputation, and relationships with others. When it comes to the work situations, Thai people place more emphasis on the individual. We can see an instance of this value in the decision-making process. For the Thais, it is usually a manager’s duty to make decisions. A decision-making process does not necessarily involve many parties. However, the manager should ask for their subordinates’ opinions.

Therefore, we can see that Japanese people are more “collective” than the Thais are when it comes to the work situations. Due to the different degrees in their value on “collectivism,” the Japanese and the Thais may have different approaches when they perform certain tasks, namely their decision-making processes. Such differences may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in the workplace.

In conclusion, since most of the existing research on cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people in the workplace is usually from one discipline such as management science, or communications, the research uses

limited perspectives in analyzing the situation. However, I believe that my study provides a deeper analysis of cross-cultural communication between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. This investigation contributes to the study of cross-cultural communication in Japanese-Thai joint ventures because it integrates and synthesizes three different perspectives from disciplines of anthropology, business administration, and speech communication in an attempt to understand cross-cultural communication between Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand.

Benefits of Adaptation to Thai Culture

Due to cultural differences between the Japanese and the Thais in the workplace, namely commitment to the company and different supervision styles, it is likely that Thai employees often work for Japanese-Thai joint ventures for a short period of time, ranging from one month to three years and then resign from the company to get a new job with better promotions or to further their studies. As a result, from the interviews with Japanese managers, many Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand are now facing a problem of high turnover rate of their Thai employees.

I would like to encourage some changes and some adaptation of the Japanese management and supervision styles because such changes and adaptation can result in fewer conflicts and misunderstandings in the workplace, and harmony among employees and between superiors and subordinates. Significantly, for Japanese managers, these changes will result in a lower turnover rate of Thai employees and higher productivity for their companies.

I believe that if Japanese managers adjust certain aspects of their management styles to accommodate Thai employees, it is likely that Thai employees may stay longer in the company. For instance, Japanese managers should try to avoid scolding their Thai employees. Instead, the Japanese should try to learn their Thai employees'

characteristics and mentor them accordingly. Furthermore, Japanese managers should give Thai employees promotions to encourage them to work hard. For example, Japanese managers can integrate local Thai managers to the Japanese management teams. Promotions should also be given equally to Thai employees of both genders to overcome gender ideologies or gender discrimination which Japanese managers brought from Japan.

Future research

Due to limited research studies on cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Thai people in the workplace, future research should be conducted to cover larger areas and perspectives as well as to provide better understandings in cross-cultural communication in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. Future research may include studies on the following topics or issues and would cover a wider range of Japanese-Thai joint ventures (i.e. companies of various sizes and companies from various types of industries).

Future Research 1

Research question: What are factors which would make Thai employees become accepted into Japanese working groups?

To examine how the Japanese accept the Thais to be in their circle of trust, we can conduct a participant observation and in-depth interviews. The interactions of both parties should be taken into considerations. We should also interview the Japanese and the Thais to explore their relationships and their criteria to accept the other party into their group. Possible factors which contribute to the Japanese acceptance of the Thais into their working groups and those factors which hinder the Thais from being accepted into the Japanese working groups should also be investigated.

Future Research 2

Research question: What training programs should we use to train Japanese expatriates and Thai subordinates so that they will be able to work together effectively?

Based on my research study and the existing literature, pre-departure training programs and other training programs should be created to help prepare Japanese expatriates, their family, and Thai employees to be able to live in Thailand and to be able to work together effectively. Training programs should be made to serve needs of the organization. We should explore the existing problems and concerns, and conduct assessment test of the target group so that proper training programs are created to suit the needs of the organization and to solve the existing problems in the workplace.

Future Research 3

Research question: What are causes of the high turnover rate of Thai employees in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand?

To find out possible causes of the high turnover rate of Thai employees in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand, we should take a holistic approach because several factors can cause such a phenomenon. A participant observation and in-depth interviews should be conducted. The interview questions should examine conflicts and misunderstandings between the Japanese and the Thais, which can contribute to the Thais' satisfaction at work. The questions should also ask what can possibly cause Thai employees to resign from the company. Moreover, we should also study the personnel policy and the promotion policy of the organization since the existing policy of the company can be causes of the high turnover rate of the Thai employees.

Future Research 4

Research question: Does the fact that managerial positions are occupied by and reserved for Japanese expatriates affect career advancement for Thai employees in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand?

The purpose of this study is to examine whether ethnocentric management policy of the Japanese causes a ceiling to career advancement for Thai employees. A broad survey across Japanese-Thai joint ventures should be conducted to learn how many Japanese expatriates are hired to work in managerial positions in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. The survey should also find out how many Thai employees work in the managerial positions of the same company.

Future Research 5

Research question: Does gender discrimination exist in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand?

The purpose of this study is to explore whether there is a ceiling to career advancement for women to be promoted to the management level in Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand. A survey should be conducted to find out how many women are in managerial positions and how many of them gain higher promotions.

Future Research 6

Research question: Does gender discrimination against women working at the lower levels exist?

The purpose of this study is to explore more fully gender discrimination against women at the lower levels. Participant observations and in-depth interviews should be conducted to examine whether gender discrimination is practiced against

women at the lower levels. If gender discrimination exists, we should also investigate different forms of gender discrimination against women at the lower levels.

Recommendations

During the interviews, I asked Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates to describe their ideal characteristics for their respective superiors and subordinates. From their answers, we can learn characteristics of superiors and subordinates with which the participants want to work. The participants are also asked to give recommendations to their superiors or subordinates so that they will be able to work together effectively. The following are recommendations for Japanese superiors and Thai subordinates.

Recommendations for Japanese Managers

1. Japanese managers should try to understand Thai culture and respect local people, including Thai cultural values at work and Thai language beforehand so that they will better understand Thai people.
2. Japanese managers should be culturally sensitive and be aware of any possible negative myths and stereotypes of the Thais when they deal with Thai subordinates since some aspects of their cultures differ.
3. Japanese managers should be open-minded, friendly, patient, understanding, and considerate.
4. Japanese managers should take care of subordinates, and support them. For instance, Japanese managers should often ask if their subordinates have any problems at work. If a problem arises, Japanese managers should avoid scolding or blaming the subordinates. Instead, Japanese managers should investigate the problem and help their subordinates solve the problem.

5. Japanese managers should give promotions to Thai subordinates. Giving promotions is a good method to encourage subordinates to work hard. For instance, Japanese managers may include Thai employees into the management team.

6. Japanese managers should listen to their subordinates' opinions during the meetings or during their informal discussions. The Japanese managers may need to encourage Thai subordinates to express their opinions by asking questions because the Thai subordinates do not usually express their opinions for fear that their opinions may differ from those of their superiors. The Thais are afraid that they will probably have conflicts with their superiors if they show any opposition to their superior's opinions.

7. When delegating jobs, Japanese managers should consider the ability of subordinates to perform certain jobs and whether the subordinates already have a lot of assignments to complete.

8. Japanese managers should learn about their subordinates' personal characteristics, get to know people as individuals and learn how to deal with them properly. The superiors should then find appropriate ways to motivate those Thai employees to work. For example, if subordinates are not experienced to perform certain duties, Japanese managers should gradually teach them how to do the jobs. Another example is that if the subordinates do not submit their assignments on time, the superiors should ask for reasons for the delay. The superiors should try to avoid scolding and blaming their subordinates because such harsh actions make subordinates afraid to talk to the superiors. The superiors should also show willingness to help subordinates if any problem arises.

9. To work with Thai subordinates effectively, Japanese managers should try to communicate with Thai subordinates by finding free time during lunch or after work hours to talk and discuss several issues, including problems at work, hobby, and family, so that subordinates will become more comfortable working with Japanese superiors.

10. Japanese superiors should be patient with their Thai subordinates. When problems arise, Japanese superiors should not scold, shout, or blame Thai subordinates

in front of their colleagues because scolding can cause detrimental loss of face in Thai culture.

11. Since there are a lot of Thai women working in the business arena, Japanese managers should be careful in dealing with female subordinates to avoid any sexual harassment or any scandals. They should also avoid any intimate contact or being alone with any female subordinates.

Recommendations for Thai Subordinates

1. Thai subordinates should study Japanese culture and Japanese language so that they will better understand aspects of Japanese culture such as scolding.
2. Thai subordinates should show respect to superiors, and listen to their directions.
3. Thai subordinates should be self-motivated and able to work by themselves.
4. Thai subordinates should be mature, reliable, and responsible for their duties.
5. Thai subordinates should be enthusiastic to learn new things, work hard, and finish assignments on time.
6. Thai subordinates should be diligent, punctual, and responsible for their jobs.
7. Thai subordinates should try to exchange their opinions and learn to work as a team.

General Recommendations

The list of general recommendations to improve better cross-cultural communication and relationships between Japanese expatriates and Thai subordinates are as follows.

1. Japanese-Thai joint venture companies

▲ The company should provide Japanese expatriates and their family members with pre-departure training programs before they leave for Thailand. The training programs may include cultural values, business practices, and Thai cultural etiquette for work settings and for everyday life.

▲ The company should also give some training programs to Japanese expatriates while they are working in Thailand. Some discussion sections should be created so that Japanese expatriates can exchange their opinions and experience with other Japanese expatriates.

▲ The company should set a party or an informal gathering in which Thai people are invited to explain Thai cultures and to answer questions Japanese expatriates may have.

2. Educational institutes

▲ Japanese culture and business practices should be included in the university's curriculum so that Thai students become aware of cultural differences and learn how to work effectively with Japanese people.

▲ It is also important to encourage students to become aware of their Thai culture, Thai business practices, and any potential conflicts when Japanese and Thai people work together.

3. The Board of Investment of Thailand (BoI)

▲ Due to a consistent increase in Japanese investment in Thailand, the Board of Investment of Thailand should support existing businesses by providing training programs for all parties working for Japanese-Thai joint ventures in Thailand.

4. Relevant Japanese organizations, namely Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

▲ To support Japanese businesses in Thailand, these organizations should arrange some training programs for Japanese expatriates and Thai employees to teach Japanese and Thai culture and to introduce effective ways for the Japanese and the Thais to work together successfully. For instance, these organizations can offer training programs about conflict negotiation between Japanese management and Thai employees in specific situations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JAPANESE MANAGERS

1. Age:

Above 50 years old _____ 50 – 40 _____
39 – 30 _____ Less than 30 years old _____

2. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

3. Education:

Doctoral or Master's Degree _____ Bachelor's Degree _____
Vocation school _____ Others (please specify) _____

4. Please indicate your salary as specified below:

More than 200,000 baht _____ 200,000 – 150,000 baht _____
149,999 – 100,000 baht _____ Less than 100,000 baht _____

5. What is your job title in the company?

6. How long have you been working for the company?

More than 30 years _____ 29 – 20 years _____
19 – 10 years _____ 9 – 5 years _____
Less than 5 years _____

7. What is your job responsibility?

8. Could you describe your typical day at work?
9. If you have working experience at other joint ventures or overseas, please describe similarities and differences you have noticed between Japanese-Thai companies and the other company in terms of culture and communication style (prompts: for example, activities in a meeting, hosting a customer, and greeting).
10. How would you characterize your relationship with your Thai subordinates?
 - a. How is it the same or different from the relationship you had with your subordinates in Japan?
 - b. Do you consider your relationship with your subordinates in Thailand a long-term relationship? Why or why not?
11. If you have both Thai managers and Thai office workers under your direct supervision, do you treat them similarly or differently?
 - a. How do you treat both groups?
 - b. Why do you treat both groups in that way?
 - c. What are your criteria in treating them?
12. In the past six months, please give examples of things which went well with your subordinates?
13. In the past six months, please give examples of things which did not go well with your subordinates?
14. Have you experienced any cultural difference which makes it convenient or difficult to work with your Thai subordinates?
 - a. Please specify the differences.
 - b. Why do you think they can be strengths?

c. What do you think they can be barriers at work?

15. In the past six months, have you done anything after work hours with your subordinates either Thai managers or Thai office workers?

a. Please specify which group – Thai managers or Thai office workers?

b. If yes, what is the purpose of the meeting (e.g., parties at work, informal after-hour gatherings, or discussion about work)?

c. If no, why not?

16. Do you consider it important to have informal discussion or gatherings with your subordinates? Why or why not?

17. Please compare your relationship with your subordinates during your work hours in the office and during your informal gatherings after work hours.

18. Please compare and contrast how you supervise your Japanese subordinates and your Thai subordinates.

19. Please describe your ideal subordinates whom you want to work with in Thailand?

20. Is there any Japanese female expatriates working in your company? Why or why not?

21. Do you have Thai female subordinates in your department?

a. Please explain strengths in working with female subordinates.

b. Please explain difficulties in working with female subordinates.

22. Let's discuss about Thai male subordinates in your department.

a. Please explain strengths in working with male subordinates.

b. Please explain difficulties in working with male subordinates.

23. Do you think it is possible for women to be managers?

a. What are advantages?

b. What are disadvantages?

24. Do you think that gender could be a barrier in career advancement or at work?

Why or why not?

25. Do you have any suggestion for Japanese managers working with the Thai?

26. Do you have any suggestion for Thai subordinates working with the Japanese?

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THAI MANAGERS

1. Age:

Above 50 years old _____ 50 – 40 _____
 39 – 30 _____ Less than 30 years old _____

2. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

3. Education:

Doctoral or Master's Degree _____ Bachelor's Degree _____
 Vocation school _____ Others (please specify) _____

4. Please indicate your salary as specified below:

More than 100,000 baht _____ 99,999 – 80,000 baht _____
 79,999 – 60,000 baht _____ 59,999 – 40,000 baht _____
 39,999 – 20,000 baht _____ Less than 20,000 baht _____

5. What is your job title in the company?

6. How long have you been working for the company?

More than 30 years _____ 29 – 20 years _____
 19 – 10 years _____ 9 – 5 years _____
 Less than 5 years _____

7. What is your job responsibility?

8. Could you describe your typical day at work?
9. If you have working experience at other joint ventures or overseas, please describe similarities and differences you have noticed between Japanese-Thai companies and the other company in terms of culture, and communication style (prompts: for example, activities in a meeting, hosting a customer, and greeting).
10. How would you characterize your relationship with your Japanese superiors?
 - a. How is it the same or different from the relationship you had with your Thai superiors if you have some?
 - b. Do you consider your relationship with your Japanese superiors a long-term relationship? Why or why not?
11. How would you characterize your relationship with your Thai subordinates?
 - a. Do you consider your relationship with your Thai subordinates a long-term relationship? Why or why not?
12. In the past six months, please give examples of things which went well with your Japanese superiors?
13. In the past six months, please give examples of things which did not go well with your Japanese superiors?
14. Have you experienced any cultural difference which makes it convenient and difficult to work with your Japanese superiors?
 - a. Please specify the differences.
 - b. Why do you think they can be strengths?
 - c. What do you think they can be barriers at work?

15. In the past six months, please give examples of things which went well with your Thai subordinates?
16. In the past six months, please give examples of things which did not go well with your Thai subordinates?
17. Think about a problem you have had at work in the last six months. How did you handle it with your Japanese superiors (e.g., discussed with your superiors, asked for advice, or solved it by yourself)?
18. In the past six months, have you had lunch or dinner with your subordinates?
 - a. If yes, what is the purpose of the meeting (e.g., informal after-hour gatherings, or discussion about work)?
 - b. If no, why not?
19. Do you consider it important to have informal discussion or gatherings with your subordinates? Why or why not?
20. Please compare and contrast your relationship with your subordinates during your work hours in the office and during your informal gatherings after work hours.
21. Please compare and contrast between the way your Japanese superiors supervise you and the way you supervise your Thai subordinates.
22. Please describe your ideal superior whom you want to work with in Thailand?
23. Please describe your ideal subordinates whom you want to work with in Thailand?
24. Do you have female subordinates in your department?

- a. Please explain strengths in working with female subordinates if any.
- b. Please give examples which happened to you in the last six months.
- c. Please explain difficulties in working with female subordinates if any.
- d. Please give examples which happened to you in the last six months.

25. Let's consider your male subordinates in your department.

- a. Please explain strengths in working with male subordinates if any.
- b. Please give examples which happened to you in the last six months.
- c. Please explain difficulties in working with male subordinates if any.
- d. Please give examples which happened to you in the last six months.

26. Do you think that gender could be a barrier in career advancement or at work?
Why or why not?

27. Do you have any suggestion for Japanese managers working with the Thai?

28. Do you have any suggestion for Thai subordinates working with the Japanese?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THAI OFFICE WORKERS

1. Age:

Above 40 years old _____ 39 – 35 _____ 34 – 30 _____
 29 – 25 _____ 24 – 20 _____ Less than 20 years old _____

2. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

3. Education:

Doctoral or Master's Degree _____ Bachelor's Degree _____
 Vocation school _____ Others (please specify) _____

4. Please indicate your salary as specified below:

More than 50,000 baht _____ 49,999 – 40,000 baht _____
 39,999 – 30,000 baht _____ 29,999 – 20,000 baht _____
 19,999 – 15,000 baht _____ 14,999 – 10,000 baht _____
 9,999 – 8,000 baht _____ Less than 8,000 baht _____

5. What is your job title in the company?

6. How long have you been working for the company?

More than 15 years _____ 14 – 10 years _____
 9 – 7 years _____ 6 – 4 years _____
 3 – 2 years _____ 1 year – 6 months _____
 Less than 6 months _____

7. What is your job responsibility?
8. Could you describe your typical day at work?
9. If you have working experience at other joint ventures or overseas, please describe similarities and differences you have noticed between Japanese-Thai companies and the other company in terms of culture, and communication style (prompts: for example, activities in a meeting, hosting a customer, and greeting).
10. How would you characterize your relationship with your Japanese superiors?
 - a. How is it the same or different from the relationship you have with your Thai superiors?
 - b. Do you consider your relationship with your Japanese superiors a long-term relationship? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you consider your relationship with your Thai superiors a long-term relationship? Why or why not?
11. Do you want to change the relationship with your superiors? Why or why not?

Questions about Business Relationship

12. Please compare and contrast between the way your Japanese superiors supervise you and the way your Thai superiors supervise you as when they give you assignments or advice.
13. In the past six months, please give examples of things which went well with your superiors:
 - a. First, with your Japanese superiors?
 - b. Second, with your Thai superiors?

14. In the past six months, please give examples of things which did not go well with your superiors as specified below:

- a. With your Japanese superiors?
- b. With your Thai superiors?

15. Have you experienced any cultural differences which make it convenient and difficult to work with your Japanese superiors?

- a. Please specify the differences.
- b. Why do you think they can be strengths?
- c. What do you think they can be barriers at work?

Questions about Person-to-Person Relationship

16. Think about a problem you have had at work in the last six months. How did you handle it with your superiors (e.g., discussed with your superiors, asked for advice, or solved it by yourself)?

17. Have you ever had informal gatherings with your superiors?

- a. If so, please describe your interactions with your superiors.
- b. If no, do you expect any informal gathering with your superiors in the future? Why or why not?

18. Please describe ideal managers with whom you want to work.

19. What are advantages you have as a male or female working with Japanese managers?

- a. Please give examples on everyday basis.

20. What are disadvantages you have as a male or female working with Japanese managers?

a. Please give examples on everyday basis.

21. Let's broaden the discussion a bit to compare Japanese male managers and Thai male managers with Thai female managers. Have you worked under supervision of female managers before?

a. Please describe what it was like to work under a female manager.

b. Please explain advantages of working with female managers.

c. Please explain disadvantages of working with female managers.

d. Please explain advantages of working with male managers.

e. Please explain disadvantages of working with male managers.

22. Do you think that gender could be a barrier in career advancement or at work? Why or why not?

23. Do you have any suggestion for Japanese managers working with the Thai?

24. Do you have any suggestion for Thai subordinates working with the Japanese?